

Crown Prince orders relief for devastated in Iran

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday sent a cable of condolences to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and asked the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Commission to send a relief plane loaded with medical aid to Iran.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز جومعة - مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية - الراي

Six dead and 71 wounded in Algerian bomb blasts

ALGIERS (AFP) — At least six people were killed and 71 injured in four explosions in Algiers late Sunday, four days before the official start of an election campaign here, according to an initial toll from security services. A car-bomb exploded outside a restaurant in the coastal Borj Al Kiffan suburb killing at least five people and wounding 30, security services said. Earlier in the afternoon, three bomb blasts in the capital claimed one life and wounded 41. Elections are scheduled for June 5.

Volume 22 Number 6526

AMMAN MONDAY, MAY 12, 1997, MUHARRAM 5, 1418

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Netanyahu plans to keep 60 per cent of West Bank

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends to keep about 60 per cent of the West Bank in a permanent settlement with the Palestinians, a senior Israeli official said Sunday.

A Palestinian official rejected the proposal outright. The Israeli newspaper Maariv reported Sunday that Mr. Netanyahu wants Israel to keep 45 to 50 per cent of the West Bank, but the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press (AP) "it's about 60 per cent, not 45 or 50."

Anis Al Qaq, deputy Palestinian planning minister, said, "there is no Palestinian who will accept Israel's keeping 60 per cent of the West Bank."

"If Israel does not want to withdraw from the areas it conquered in 1967, and if the peace talks do not lead to establishment of a Palestinian state, then there is no need for peacemaking," he told the AP.

Under Mr. Netanyahu's plan, Israel would keep land in the Jordan Valley — along a north-south mountain ridge running through the West Bank — around the Gush Etzion Bloc of settlements south of Jerusalem — along the West Bank's western border with Israel, and on both sides of the corridor connecting Jerusalem with the rest of Israel, the official said.

Mr. Netanyahu is opposed to the Palestinian entity having a common border with Jordan. Israeli troops would therefore remain permanently along the Jordan River to ensure that no Arab army ever crossed the river.

In the last stages of the negotiations, Mr. Netanyahu will agree to evacuate a few isolated settlements, to avoid leaving them "surrounded by a sea of Arabs," Maariv said. The settlers would be moved to larger settlement blocs.

In his public statements, Mr. Netanyahu expressed opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state, but in private he says he does not care what the Palestinians call their entity provided it does not have armed forces with heavy weapons, according to Maariv.

Mr. Netanyahu's plan is based on a map drawn up by defence officials showing areas deemed vital for Israel's strategic interests. The map has already been shown to the cabinet, the official said, and will be officially submitted in the near future.

Israel's chief of military intelligence warned in an interview published Sunday that Yasser Arafat would

return to violence if he lost hope of achieving a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem.

Major General Moshe Yaalon told the Haaretz newspaper that "if they perceive that aim as threatened, they are likely to resort to violence."

Mr. Yaalon said the Palestinians are still not cooperating fully with Israel to prevent attacks against Israelis by militants.

Friday's meeting between Israeli and Palestinian security officials was just a gesture to the American envoy Dennis Ross, who has urged Mr. Arafat to resume security cooperation with Israel, General Yaalon said.

"I have a list of Islamic Jihad and Hamas activists," Gen. Yaalon said, "and until I see them behind bars I cannot say that Arafat is taking serious action, and I'm not talking about his arresting political or religious figures."

Unless there is full cooperation Gen. Yaalon said he will not recommend that Israel permit the opening of the "safe passage" for Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Nor would he recommend the Israel allow the opening of a Palestinian airport and seaport in Gaza, as promised in the Israel-PLO accords, "because we

Ross meets Mubarak

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak held talks with U.S. envoy Dennis Ross Saturday on ways to revive the Middle East peace process but Egyptian officials said it was too early to speak of any breakthroughs.

Mr. Ross said after the meeting in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm Al Sheikh that he had held "useful" discussions with Mr. Mubarak, who has often mediated in troubled rounds of peace talks.

The U.S. envoy said the meeting gave him a chance to present what he was doing to overcome differences between Palestinians and Israelis and bring them to the negotiating table in order to end a two-month deadlock triggered by Israel's decision to begin work on a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

"The U.S. is acting with both parties to bring the peace process back on track," Mr. Ross told reporters in the resort town.

Crown Prince calls for linking vocational, academic education to serve labour market

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Sunday at the Ministry of Education that coordinating vocational and academic education with the needs of the labour market is integral to the achievement of economic development thereby raising the Jordanian standard of living.

Prince Hassan sought to emphasise this coordination during separate meetings held with presidents of private universities, members of the educational development committee and during a visit to the Ain Al Basha vocational training centre.

In the meeting with the educational development committee at the ministry of education, Prince Hassan emphasised the need for the committee to develop the second phase of the educational development process.

Prince Hassan yesterday stressed the importance of modernising the educational system in coordination with the needs of the labour market within the framework of comprehensive development plans which have become a necessity in light of economic, social and technological developments.

The Crown Prince stressed the interconnectivity between the educational process and economic development.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan with students of Ain Al Basha Vocational Training Centre on Sunday (Petra photo)

package's success and the overall economic rehabilitation process.

The Prince underlined the important role of teachers in the educational process, saying their work will essentially reflect on economic performance. Provision of qualified graduates will supply the market with its needs of a competent workforce.

In this respect, Prince Hassan called for raising teachers' professional standards and improving their social status.

Other aspects of the educational process such as educational management, catering to gifted and handicapped student needs should also receive due attention, Prince Hassan said during the meeting attended by deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour

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Cabinet enacts long awaited companies and securities laws

Reforms expected to lure foreign investments

AMMAN (R) — Jordan's move to enact into law two major reforms to overhaul the stock market and modernise company legislation will help its bourse lure foreign investors, investment managers said on Sunday.

A Royal Decree passed on Saturday enacting the new Securities Law also lifts the last legal hurdle to the passage of an overhauled Companies Law, which the government had put on hold after approving it three months ago.

The new Companies Law cancels a 15 per cent tax on companies raising their capital bases by shifting money from reserves.

The new Securities Law, the first major overhaul of the bourse since it was set up in 1978, permits dual listing of Jordanian firms on the Amman bourse and international exchanges, encourages Jordanian global depository receipts, and allows the listing of mutual funds on the stock market for the first time.

It will also set up within two years an automated

central depository settlement system and will restrict the duties of the bourse management to those of a regulator, leaving operations in the hands of the private sector.

The two pieces of reform are part of a wider package of economic reforms awaiting legislative action to improve the business climate.

"Yes of course there will be a noticeable increase in foreign buying," said Ziad Basba, securities manager at Jordan's British Bank of the Middle East.

Investment managers say earlier delays in passing the laws had hampered trade over the last two months in leading blue chip shares, which had risen on expectations of bonus share issues. The firms promised shareholders they would boost their capital with transfers from reserves, including free shares offers.

Analysts expect those promises to be fulfilled soon now that the laws

Shares climb 0.71 per cent

AMMAN (R) — Shares on Jordan's stock exchange rose across the board in busy trade on Sunday, climbing 0.71 per cent on a wave of optimism after the government approved laws to overhaul the stock market and modernise company legislation.

The official 60-share Amman Financial Market (AFM) index rose 1.07 points to 152.00 points, its biggest daily increase in nearly two months, in trade worth 1.11 million dinars (\$1.6 million).

Twenty-nine shares rose. Shares in just two firms fell in combined trade worth less than 1,000 dinars.

Brokers said the market was boosted by foreign buying as well as local demand as investors took heart from the new companies and securities laws, which will reform Amman bourse operations and can-

central depository settlement system and will restrict the duties of the bourse management to those of a regulator, leaving operations in the hands of the private sector.

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U.S. reported planning to reduce aid to Israel, increase it to Jordan

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The United States has informed Israel of plans to slash its annual \$1.2 billion in civilian aid to it, an Israeli newspaper reported Sunday quoting government officials.

The mass-circulation daily Maariv said several officials had expressed alarm at the purported intention of U.S. President Bill Clinton to seek a reduction of several hundred million dollars in civilian aid for next year.

"Several officials said they had been informed of a plan by the Clinton administration to significantly reduce civilian aid in the next fiscal year," the news-

paper reported.

Washington's \$1.8 billion in annual military aid to Israel would be untouched, it said. Maariv said the U.S. plan would also involve reducing U.S. civilian aid to Egypt and that Mr. Clinton had enough support in the U.S. Congress to carry out the cuts. At the same time, U.S. aid would be increased to Jordan, the only Arab state with Egypt to have signed a peace treaty with Israel, it said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has in the past suggested that the Israeli economy would be better off not relying on such a high-level of U.S. financial assistance,

discussed the planned shift in U.S. aid policy last week with King Hussein. The Maariv report surfaced as U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross was bogged down in efforts to get Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table after their peace process broke down due to Jewish settlement of land claimed by the Palestinians. The report made no link between the planned aid cut and U.S. displeasure with Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to freeze settlement expansion pending the outcome of scheduled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories.

Ensour denies plans to lay off public employees

AMMAN (Petra) — The government Sunday denied it had plans for laying off its employees or retiring them but asserted that from now on it will reduce the number of vacant posts and will only appoint people when it is absolutely necessary.

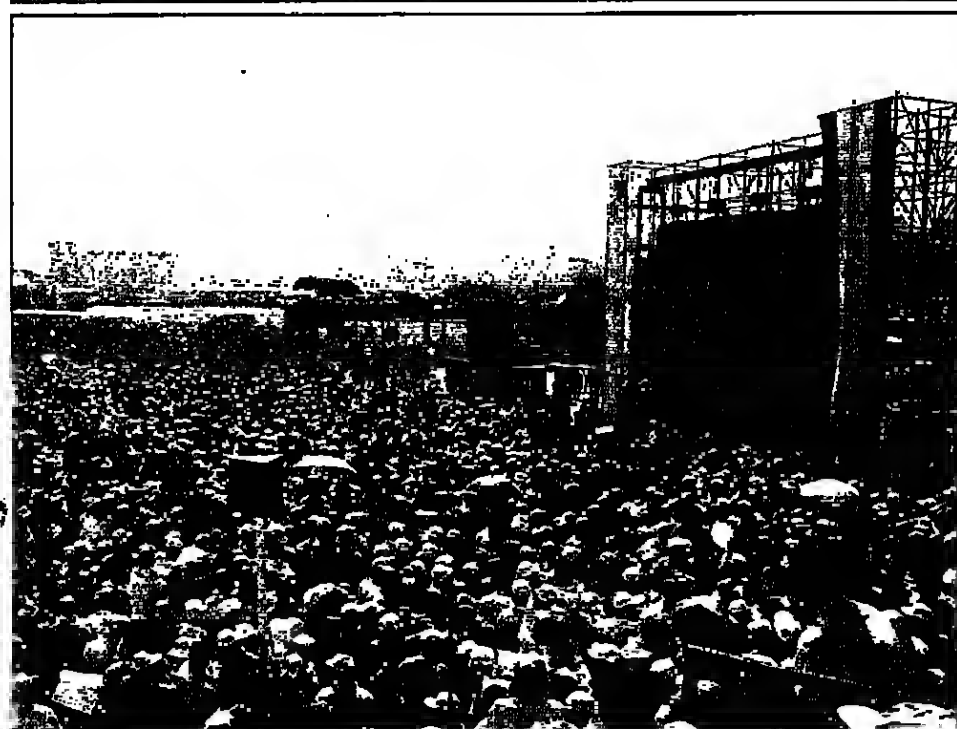
The government also intends to merge ministries with similar services and work has already started in retraining and readapting civil servants to adapt them to the new work system, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Development Affairs Abdullah Ensour said in a meeting with the Administrative Committee at the Lower House of Parliament.

The government is totally committed to implementing His Majesty King Hussein's directives as contained in the Letter of Designation to the government regarding the bloated administrative system and is also committed to the King's directives that no employees be harmed in the course of the government's handling of the flag-by-administration, stressed Dr. Ensour who added that the government will only undertake carefully calculated measures in this respect.

Pointing out that the Jordanian civil and military administration systems are among the largest in the world compared with the volume of population, Dr. Ensour said that this has to do with the country's history and political makeup which has accumulated over the past decades with the huge migration of people to the Kingdom.

"We have embarked on an economic march despite the difficulties and obstacles and we have sufficient

(Continued on page 7)



A huge crowd watch Pope John Paul II on a screen during a Sunday mass at a Beirut construction site. The Pope took his message of Muslim-Christian reconciliation into the battle-scarred heart of Beirut (Reuters photo)

Pope celebrates mass along with hundreds of thousands in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — Pope John Paul II celebrated an open-air mass on the seafront of war-devastated downtown Beirut on Sunday before several hundred thousand pilgrims who flocked from across the country to attend the historic ceremony.

The pontiff stood on a podium in the form of a cedar tree, Lebanon's national symbol, overlooking a vast sea of worshippers, with the bell tower of a Catholic church and the minaret of a mosque in the background.

"Peace be with you," the 76-year-old Pope said on the second day of his historic visit, seen here as a symbol of hope for the country wracked by 15 years of war between Christian and Muslim forces.

"Lebanon has shown that these different faiths can live together in peace,

brotherhood and cooperation," he said in his sermon delivered at an altar built of ancient stones.

"I am certain that the sufferings of the past years will not be in vain, they will strengthen your freedom and unity," he said.

At least a quarter of a million Christians, many waving yellow and white Vatican flags, attended the mass which included hymns sung by a 500-member choir.

"Your visit resembles the visit of Christ to Sidon two thousand years ago when he cured a paralysed man. Your visit will heal our wounds," said Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir, head of the Maronite Church.

The Maronites form the most important community of Lebanon's 1.5 million Christians, out of an estimated population of four million.

The Christians held the lion's share of power before

the 1975-1990 civil war but today feel increasingly marginalised by the pro-Syrian regime.

"We thank you for your backing which consolidates confidence in Lebanon, national reconciliation, independence, sovereignty and free decision," Cardinal Sfeir said.

More than 250,000 people had greeted the papal convoy on the 20-kilometre road to Beirut from the port of Junieh to the north.

The flag-waving crowd freed doves of peace and threw rice and flowers on the Pope's arrival. The pontiff greeted them and made the sign of the cross.

The pontiff received a rapturous welcome from across the religious spectrum on his arrival Saturday, when he pleaded for Lebanese people to work together for peace after the

(Continued on page 7)

Eastern Iran quake death toll reaches 2,000

MASHHAD (R) — Up to 2,000 people were killed in the powerful earthquake that hit eastern Iran where rescue teams and villagers searched through the rubble on Sunday for survivors.

As appeals for international aid went out, an Iranian Red Crescent statement quoted by Tehran Radio said the death toll had risen to 2,000 in the earthquake which struck on Saturday with a force of 7.1 on the Richter scale.

Iranian television showed footage of mass destruction in the quake zone, with barely a wall left standing in one town and children, including crying toddlers, wandering aimlessly among the rubble.

Villagers dug with shovels and bodies were brought out from the debris slung in sheets.

A make-shift refugee centre set up in a large hall was filled with survivors ministering to children. Some were on drip feeds.

The Red Crescent said the quake — Iran's worst since 1990 when more than 35,000 were killed — hit 200 villages inflicting damage between 70 per cent and 100 per cent.

The radio said 2,000 relief workers using 300 vehicles were in the area where some 10,000 houses were estimated to have been destroyed in villages in Khorasan province, which borders Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

Iran's Deputy Interior Minister for Natural Disasters Rasul Zargar was quoted by the official Iranian

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat keeping violence options open — Israeli intelligence chief

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The head of Israeli army intelligence asserted Sunday that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will order new attacks against Israel if negotiations cannot achieve Palestinian independence.

"If Arafat feels that he has not succeeded in moving forward, then — and I state this categorically — he will return to violence," General Moshe Yaalon said in an interview with the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

General Yaalon complained that despite promises by Mr. Arafat to resume security cooperation halted when negotiations between the two sides broke down in March over the issue of Jewish settlement building, "I don't see any fight by the Palestinian (National) Authority against terrorism."

Ahmad Abdul Rahman, general-secretary of Mr. Arafat's cabinet, rejected Gen. Yaalon's claim, saying

"peace is a strategic option and not a tactical one for us, we do not want violence."

But he quickly added that the Palestinians "will not stand with their hands tied while Israeli expands settlements and 'Judaizes' Jerusalem."

"The Palestinian people have the right to confront settlements in every way possible," he said.

Negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians have been frozen since Israel began construction on March 18 of a new Jewish settlement on occupied Arab land in East Jerusalem.

The Jewish building on land where Palestinians want to establish the capital of a future state, sparked widespread violent protests in the Palestinian areas and a revival of bombing attacks against Jewish targets.

U.S. Mideast envoy Dennis Ross has been in the region since Wednesday in a bid to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, but has

made no apparent headway in breaking the deadlock caused by Jewish settlement activity.

Under U.S. pressure, senior Israeli and Palestinian security officials met Friday in Tel Aviv, but Israeli officials said the Palestinians still refused to resume full cooperation in the fight against militant violence as long as Israel continues building settlements.

"The security cooperation by the Palestinian Authority so far is designed only to score points with the Americans," Gen. Yaalon said. "I have a list of Islamic Jihad and Hamas members and until I see them sitting behind bars I will not be able to say Arafat is acting seriously," he said, referring to militant groups responsible for most anti-Israeli attacks.

"The Palestinian (National) Authority is obligated to the peace process since this is the only strategic option at

present which can enable them to attain their goal of an independent state with east Jerusalem as its capital," he said.

"But it should be clear, they are committed to this process only as long as they see the goal as attainable," he said.

Mr. Yaalon said that in the absence of full cooperation in the fight against extremist violence, he would oppose fulfillment of Israeli obligations to let the Palestinians open an airport or seaport in Gaza or establish travel corridors between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I will not advise in favour of (these projects) since there will be no way to inspect what goes in and out," he said.

In the absence of cooperation, Israel sealed the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Saturday to Tuesday for fear of militant attacks during Israeli independence day Monday and memorial day Sunday.



CURFEW: An Israeli border policeman checks the identity papers of a Palestinian man and his wife who are bringing their sick daughter into occupied Jerusalem on Sunday to take her to a hospital for treatment. Israel has imposed a closure on West Bank Palestinians entering Israel as it marks its memorial day today and its 49th Independence Day tomorrow. The wife and child were eventually allowed to enter Jerusalem but the father was turned back (Reuters photo)

MAJOR EARTHQUAKES IN LAST TEN YEARS

10 May, 1997

IRAN

Up to 2,000 killed when earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale rocked rural area

28 May, 1995

RUSSIA

Russia's worst quake, measuring 7.5, killed 1,989 people on the remote Sakhalin Island

17 January, 1995

JAPAN

At least 6,055 people killed after quake measuring 7.2 ripped through central Japan

6 June, 1994

COLOMBIA

Some 1,000 killed in earthquake and mudslide disaster in Paez River valley

30 September, 1993

INDIA

Up to 22,000 people killed after series of powerful earthquakes near Lalur

12 December, 1992

INDONESIA

2,200 people killed on the islands of Flores and Bali by earthquake measuring 6.8

20 October, 1991

INDIA

1,600 killed by 6.1 earthquake northeast of Delhi

1 February, 1991

PAKISTAN / AFGHANISTAN

1,200 died when 6.8 earthquake shook both countries

16 July, 1990

PHILIPPINES

At least 2,000 killed and an estimated 148,000 made homeless by quake measuring 7.7

21 June, 1990

IRAN

Earthquake measuring 7.7 kills 50,000 in Iran's worst recorded disaster

7 December, 1988

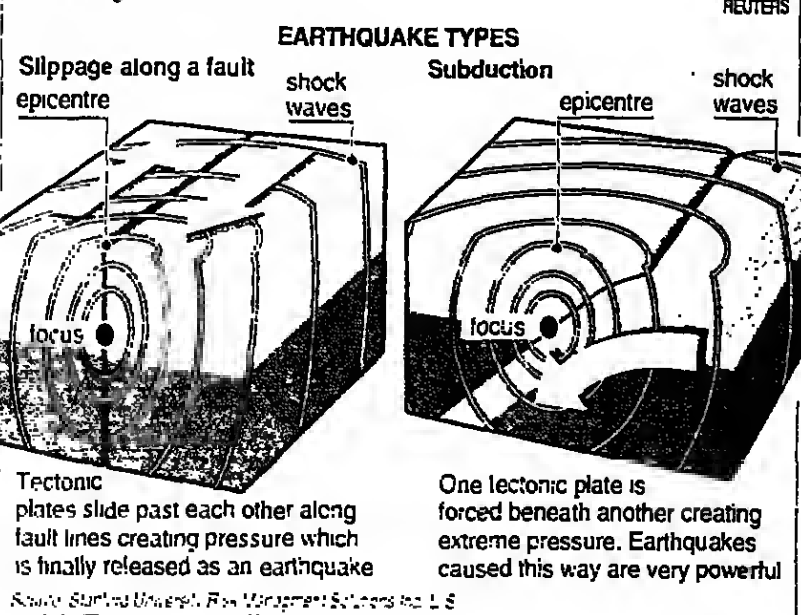
SOVIET UNION

More than 25,000 killed when earthquake measuring 6.9 struck northwest Armenia

5 March, 1987

ECUADOR

Earthquake centered on El Reventador leaves 1,000 dead



Despite quake, electioneering starts in Iran

DUBAI (R) — Iranian candidates on Sunday launched campaigns for May 23 election to replace President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, overshadowed by a massive earthquake in the east of the country.

Tehran residents said posters of the four candidates approved by the powerful Guardian Council, which rejected 234 others who had also signed up to run, appeared across the Iranian capital at the start of official campaigning.

Yellow banners put up by backers of conservative Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri and blue ones spread across streets by pro-Rafsanjani supporters of former minister Mohammad Khatami called for wide popular participation in the polls.

But election coverage was overwhelmed by news of a major earthquake that killed about 2,000 people and injured thousands more.

Residents said there were a few cases of rival groups tearing down posters in the run-up to the election which appeared to be a two-horse race between Mr. Nateq Nouri and Mr. Khatami.

Mr. Nateq Nouri, who is close to Iran's traditional bazaar merchants, is backed by key clerical groups and by the majority conservative faction in the parliament.

Mr. Khatami draws support from a coalition of pro-Rafsanjani centrists and Islamist left-wingers who have moderated many of their views in recent years.

The other candidates are hardline conservative Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahr, a former intelligence minister, and Reza Zavarei, a conservative who is deputy head of the judiciary.

All four are Shiite Muslims and only Mr. Zavarei is not a cleric. They were approved after being screened for their allegiance to Iran's Islamic government system and "absolute obedience" to Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Election officials have warned state-funded newspapers against supporting a particular candidate and the state radio and television have said the entrants would get equal time. The moves came after opponents of Mr. Nateq Nouri accused the radio and television of publicizing his campaign by covering events he attended in his official capacity.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kaddoumi condemns Israeli-Turkish alliance

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The head of Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Political Department, Farouk Kaddoumi, on Sunday expressed concern about a Turkish-Israeli military alliance. "We are worried because Turkey is a strategically important Islamic state and such an alliance damages Arab-Turkish relations," Mr. Kaddoumi told reporters in Damascus. Tunis-based Kaddoumi, who is opposed to the 1993 Oslo accords between Israel and Palestinian National Authority (PNA), was speaking after talks with Nayef Hawatmeh — the leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). Turkey has stepped up military cooperation with Israel during the past year despite strong Arab protests, and a Turkish general was in the Jewish state last week to discuss joint manoeuvres in the Mediterranean between Israeli, Turkish and U.S. forces. Turning to the peace process, Mr. Kaddoumi said the Israeli-Palestinian track had been "marginalised" by the headline policies of the right-wing Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Two more Bahrainis released in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Two Bahrainis among a group arrested in March by the Kuwaiti security forces for alleged subversive activities have been released, lawyers said Sunday. Adel Al Haiki and Abdul Nabi Al Asfour, both Bahrainis in their early twenties, were released Saturday on a bail of 200 dinars (\$658) each after being held since March, defence lawyers said. The two were among a group of 11 Bahrainis arrested at the end of March for alleged subversive activities, including distributing leaflets against the government in Manama and illegally collecting donations. Further arrests followed. Ten Bahrainis have now been released, some on bail, while four others are still being detained. Lawyers said the investigation by the public prosecution is continuing. All the Bahrainis arrested were Shiite.

Algerian election candidates' throats slit

ALGIERS (AFP) — Two candidates standing in Algeria's June 5 general elections had their throats slit by suspected militants "several days ago," their party, the Young Democratic Movement (MJD), said Sunday. Abdul Kader Zerhouni and Noureddine Ziad were killed after they were ambushed on the road between Blida and Medea, 80 kilometres south of Algiers, party President Redouane Hamidou told AFP. "They had their throats cut, their bodies were doused in petrol and they were burnt," Mr. Hamidou said. "Our two candidates were pre-campaigning and were carrying their MJD cards on them when they were stopped at night. It happened a few days ago," he added. The campaign begins officially next Thursday and ends on June 2, with most political parties taking part. The MJD, which is part of the present transitional parliament, is putting up 174 candidates. Saturday, a key Algerian opposition figure, Djafar Ouahoune, and his bodyguard were shot dead before students at a high school 100 kilometres south of Algiers. The two men were gunned down by a group of five men who were wearing police uniforms.

Jewish state accuses Force 17 of murdering east Jerusalem Arab

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel accused Yasser Arafat's personal guard Sunday of killing an east Jerusalem Arab suspected of selling Arab land to Jews.

Land dealer Farid Bashiti, 70, was killed Thursday in the Palestinian-controlled city of Ramallah. His body was found with his skull crushed, hands tied behind his back and mouth sealed with plastic tape.

"There is no doubt at all that Force 17 killed him," a senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press (AP).

Force 17, commanded by Amin Al Hindi, is Mr. Arafat's personal bodyguard. Bashiti was seen at the Force 17 headquarters in Ramallah at 9.30 p.m. Thursday, the official said. "At 2 a.m. the hospital in Ramallah phoned his wife and told her she could come and pick up his body."

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) denied involvement in Bashiti's death.

"This is a murder and the Palestinian (National) Authority is not involved in it," Deputy Planning Minister Anis Al Qaq told the Associated Press.

The Israeli official said Bashiti was lured to a meeting at the Ambassador Hotel in east Jerusalem by a woman who told him she had buyers for two houses in Ramallah he was trying to sell.

The account was corroborated Saturday by Bashiti's family, who denied he had sold property to Jews.

It has not yet been established whether Bashiti was kidnapped at the hotel or went to Ramallah of his own free will, Jerusalem police

spokesman Shmuel Ben Rubi said Sunday.

Israel maintains that any activity of the Palestinian security forces in Jerusalem is a violation of the Israel-Palestinian peace accords.

A number of Jerusalem Arabs have been kidnapped in the past two years by PNA agents and subjected to tough interrogations. The abductions were attributed to the Palestinian Protective Security Service in the West Bank, headed by Colonel Jibril Rajoub.

This is the first time, however, that Israel accused Mr. Arafat's personal guard of being involved.

The death came just days after Palestinian Justice Minister Freih Abu Medeen announced that Palestinians caught selling land to Jews would face the death penalty.

Mr. Abu Medeen said Friday that he did not agree with murder, but that the incident was proof that "nobody will accept a traitor."

The mufti of Jerusalem, the city's highest-ranking Islamic clergyman, told the AP Saturday that he had issued a fatwa, or death sentence, against Muslims who sell land to Israelis. In a sermon at the Al Aqsa Mosque Friday, Mufti Sabri said Bashiti was an infidel who could not be buried at a Muslim cemetery. He also forbade Muslims to pray for Bashiti at the mosque.

Land is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinians see their hopes of establishing an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem threatened by the expansion of Jewish settlements in those areas — sometimes on land sold by Arabs.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35 French cartoon

16:00 Documentary — The German scene

16:25 Deep Water Haven

16:50 The Ocean Girl

17:00 Documentary — Extra Dimensions

18:00 French Programmes

19:30 News Headlines

19:35 Comedy — One Foot in the Grave

20:00 Documentary — Discover Mega zone

20:30 Murder She Wrote

21:10 Highlander

22:00 News in English

22:25 Under Suspicion

22:55 Mini-series — Cinder Path

PRAYER TIMES

04:08 Fajr

05:36 Sunrise Duha

12:32 Dhuhur

16:12 Asr

19:23 Maghreb

20:55 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweifeh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

652785 St. Joseph Church Tel. 652590 Church of the Annunciation Tel. 657440 De la Salle Church Tel. 661757 Terre Sancta Church Tel. 622566 Anglican Church Tel. 652326 Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771531 Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 Deserts.....17/38 Jordan Valley.....21/40 Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457 The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654952 Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295 English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190	ment of Meteorology Hot and dry weather conditions will prevail with temperatures above average by 8-9 degrees centigrade and winds variable to southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm. Min./Max. temp. Amman.....19/36 Aqaba.....25/41 Deserts.....17/38 Jordan Valley.....21/40 Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 35, Aqaba 40 Humidity readings: Amman 18 per cent, Aqaba 17 per cent.	Ferdows pharmacy.....778336 Al Asena pharmacy.....637055 Nairoukh pharmacy.....623672 Al Salam pharmacy.....636730 Yacoub pharmacy.....644945 Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660 Najib pharmacy.....847632 IRBD: Dr. Ahmad Qama.....281484 Al Quds pharmacy.....1- ZARQA: Dr. Salah Al Safarini.....987565 Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417 EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre.....637111 Civil Defence Department.....601111 Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341 Civil Defence Emergency.....199 Rescue Police.....192 621111 637777 Fire Brigade.....617101 Blood Bank.....775121 Highway Police.....843402 Traffic Police.....896390 Public Security Dept.....630321 Hotel Complaints.....605800 Price Complaints.....661176 Water & Sewage Complaints.....897467	Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111 Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121 Overseas Calls.....010230 Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101 Abdall Tel. Repairs.....661101 Jordan Television.....773111 Radio Jordan.....774111 Water Authority.....680100 J. Electricity Authority.....815615 Electric Power Co.....636381 RJ Flight Information.....08-53200 Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200 Al-Bashir.....775111/26 Army, Marka.....891611/15 Queen Alia Hospital.....602340/50 Amal Hospital.....674155 The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....365199 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital09/985323 Zarqa National Hospital09/900560 Ibn Sina Hospital.....09/986732 Al Hikma Modern Hospital09/990990 IRBD: Princess Basma Hospital02/275555 Greek Catholic Hospital02/27275 Ibn Al Nafees Hospital02/247100 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital03/514111 FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 108153200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 081532700. ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 08:00.....Damascus (RJ) 08:15.....Sanaa (RJ) 09:35.....Jeddah (RJ) 10:30.....New Delhi (RJ) 10:50.....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) 11:05.....Beirut (RJ) 17:20.....Cairo (RJ) 17:30.....London (RJ) 17:40.....New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 19:15.....Jakarta (add) (RJ) 19:30.....Bangkok (RJ) 22:50.....Lyon (RJ) 23:00.....Copenhagen, Aqaba (RJ) 23:10.....Casablanca (RJ) 02:45.....Jeddah (RJ) 04:40.....Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ) Other Flights 10:30.....Cairo (MS)	14:30.....Bahrain (GF) 15:05.....Vienna (OS) 21:10.....Paris, Damascus (AF) 21:30.....Tel Aviv (IA) 23:30.....Athens (OA) 01:20.....Amsterdam (KL) DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 07:20.....Beirut (RJ) 10:10.....Copenhagen (add) (RJ) 11:00.....Casablanca (RJ) 11:15.....Aqaba, Lyon (add) (RJ) 12:25.....Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ) 13:15.....Cairo (RJ) 13:20.....London (RJ) 13:35.....Amsterdam, Frankfurt (RJ) 21:15.....Jeddah (add) (RJ) 22:05.....Dubai, Muscat (RJ) 23:40.....Sanaa (RJ) 23:59.....Damascus (RJ) 09:30.....Abu Dhabi (RJ) 02:35.....Bahrain, Doha (RJ) 04:00.....Abu Dhabi, Jakarta (add) (RJ) 05:45.....Marka, Aqaba (add) (RJ) Other Flights 06:15.....Istanbul (TK) 06:20.....London (BA) 08:45.....Beirut (ME) 11:20.....Cairo (MS) 15:00.....Bahrain (GF) 15:50.....Vienna (OS) 22:50.....Tel Aviv (LY) 23:55.....Damascus, Paris (AF) 02:30.....Amsterdam (KL)
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WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-



His Majesty King Hussein distributes a diploma to an excellent female royal military police recruit (photo by Yousef Allan)

King, Queen attend graduation ceremony of female royal military police recruits

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday attended the graduation ceremony of female royal military police recruits. The King observed shooting exercises carried out by the recruits. He later distributed diplomas to the graduates and awards to those excelling among them.

King Hussein also attended hand combat exercises performed by a group of the Indonesian special forces, currently visiting the Kingdom.

The King, accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor and HRH Princess Aisha Bent Al Hussein, was received by Commander of the Jordanian Special Forces Prince Abdullah.

Attending the exercises were Royal family members, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, and senior armed forces and police officers.

Chaine des Rotisseurs Higher Council bestows gold medal upon the Queen

AMMAN (J.T.) — President of International Relations of the Chaine des Rotisseurs Thierry Terrier Sunday presented Her Majesty Queen Noor with the gold medal of the Chaine's Higher Council for her "activism in environmental protection, in promoting awareness and in initiating community action for the preservation of Jordan's natural heritage," a Royal Court statement said.

Mr. Terrier described the main aim of the Chaine des Rotisseurs as "protecting, enhancing and defending the virtue of quality — be it of cooking, products or human relations."

He stated that "quality is only provided when both nature and people are respected," adding that the Queen and her work "embody all of these qualities," according to the statement.

The Queen and Mr. Terrier also discussed plans for next year's regional conference in Jordan, where people from around the world will come to celebrate the Mediterranean diet, now considered the healthiest in the world, the statement said.

Queen Noor is the first Arab member of the Chaine des Rotisseurs Council of Honour which includes Pope John Paul II, President Ronald Reagan, Prince Rainier of Monaco, the late



President of International Relations for the Chaine des Rotisseurs Thierry Terrier Sunday presents Her Majesty Queen Noor with the gold medal of the Chaine's Higher Council for her "activism in environmental protection, in promoting awareness and in initiating community action for the preservation of Jordan's natural heritage" (Petra photo)

French President Francois Mitterrand, former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Prince Constantin and Princess Nora of Liechtenstein and Prince Henrik of Denmark.

La Chaine des Rotisseurs, established in 1950, traces its origins to the Royal Guild of Rotisseurs founded in 1248 under the patronage of Saint Louis, the then king of France. The aim of the Guild was to "perpetuate standards of quality befitting the Royal

Table." Today, La Chaine des Rotisseurs groups gastronomes, gourmets and professionals from all over the world, the statement said.

Each Chaine has six categories of membership, which range from the "Chevaliers," people with an interest in fine food and quality service to "Les Bacheliers" (Presidents of the Chapters) who are professional food and beverage managers of exclusive gourmet establishments.

Last May, the Regency Hotel in Amman became the first and only hotel in Jordan to be the headquarters of Jordan's newly established chapter, the statement said.

Attending the meeting with the Queen were Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji, who is the gastronomic advisor of the Jordanian Chapter, President of the Jordanian Chapter Said Sawalha and Chargé of the Chaine's Mission Frans Sawalha.

\$13.6 m earmarked to upgrade waste water plant

Residents nearby complain of resultant pollution, illness

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

KHIRBIT AL SAMRA — Jordanian and American officials Sunday inaugurated a \$13.6 million project to expand and upgrade Al Samra Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) in order to improve Jordan's waste water infrastructure and increase the efficiency of the treatment plant.

The plant, inaugurated in Khibrit Al Samra, 40 kms northeast of Amman, in 1985 covers 2,000 hectares and consists of 32 treatment ponds, according to a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) statement.

It treats domestic, industrial and commercial waste water from Amman.

Treated effluent from Al Samra flows back to the Zarqa river and from there to the King Talal reservoir where it mixes with rain-water runoff and released, as required, for irrigation in the Jordan Valley, the statement said.

The project is part of the United States sponsored Improved Water Resources Management Strategic Objective (WIRMSO) programme in which the United States is slated to contribute \$56

million to improve overall management and conservation of Jordanian water resources.

USAID has contributed \$12 million in grants for the project to enable the plant to treat 170,000 cubic metres of water each day to be used for irrigation purposes. The remaining sum came from Jordan.

USAID Director in Amman Lewis W. Lucke described the plant as part of a major U.S.-Jordanian programme to improve water resource management.

The programme is also aimed at strengthening water sector institutions to provide waste water infrastructure for the Greater Amman and Wadi Mousa areas, he added.

"The programme is a short-term emergency activity. USAID is currently preparing a study for a long-term solution to the Al Samra plant," Mr. Lucke added.

"The study," he added "includes a waste water master plan and a feasibility study for the Amman-Zarqa River basin area until the year 2025."

The project's inauguration has come at a time in which Jordan is negotiating with Israel to supply the Kingdom, faced with

water scarcity, with 50 million cubic metres of water as stipulated in the 1994 peace treaty signed between the two countries.

Israel agreed to supply Jordan with 25 million cubic metres on annual bases with the remaining amount to be provided after three years.

Upgrading Al Samra plant is part of the American agency's programme to help Jordan improve the management of water resources. The construction work was carried out by the U.S.-based Morganti National, Inc., Connecticut and Camp Dresser and McKee International, Massachusetts. Local firms have provided engineering and construction services.

A major project which has been completed with the Water Authority of Jordan (WAOJ) is the emergency programme to upgrade Al Samra waste water treatment plant.

Meanwhile, residents of Al-Hashimiyeh (five kilometres from Al Samra) and other villages surrounding the plant have criticised the expansion process, claiming the plant is responsible for pollution in the area and diseases among the inhabitants.

"The residents of the area have been suffering from this project since 1985. We are suffering from the sewage emanating from the flow of water around the plant. We are not asking to transfer the plant away from this area but we want to improve the plant's performance and their methods of water treatment to ensure our safety," Mayor of Hashimiyeh Touhaimar Zayoud told the Jordan Times.

Mayor of the village of Ghraisa, also near the plant, Mahmoud Zayoud described water ponds in the area as a source of "flies, mosquitoes, bad smells and sewage ponds which endanger the 70,000 residents in the area. If they want to continue the project they must construct a pipeline to transport the sewage away from the area."

Representatives of these residents peacefully protested the inauguration ceremony and called upon the government to delay the project which, they allege, is "causing allergies and different diseases." "We urge His Majesty the King to help us banish this nightmare which is threatening our lives," Mr. Mahmoud concluded.

Premier discusses youth needs

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday visited the Ministry of Culture and Youth and participated in a discussion of issues of concern to sports and youth in Jordan.

Dr. Majali and Minister of Culture and Youth Qasem Abu Ein also covered a number of topics concerning administrative development and the ministry's future plans.

The premier voiced his appreciation of the ministry's work.

Underlining the role of youth in the country's development, Dr. Majali maintained that it is the youth who must spearhead the future development of the Kingdom and that their needs deserve due attention.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour who later joined Mr. Abu Ein and ministry department heads in a discussion related to today's youth in the Kingdom and their projected needs.

High voltage conference opens today

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 12 countries will today open an international conference on High Voltage Transmission Systems at the Regency Palace Hotel to discuss the most recent technological developments in high voltage electric power.

The participants will review 51 scientific research papers, prepared by universities and other institutions, concerning electric power and its generation as well as cooperation among engineers specialising in this field in the Arab World, according to Assistant Director

General of the National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) Ahmad Hiyasat.

Three international experts from Jordan, Canada and Denmark have been invited to address the two-day meeting on issues concerning high voltage transmission systems, Dr. Hiyasat confirmed.

He added that the NEPCO has created a national committee to organise the meeting in conjunction with the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) and others.

Rural issues seminar focuses on sustainable development

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Mamser Sunday opened an 11-day regional seminar on rural development, calling on research centres to focus on sustainable development issues in rural regions.

In Jordan, as in other developing nations, rural communities still suffer from stagnation, poverty, unemployment, malnutrition and sickness which impede development, thereby necessitating efforts to raise the socio-economic standards of people in these regions, Dr. Mamser asserted.

Organised by the regional Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Near East (CARDNE), the seminar entitled, "training instructors in rural research," is currently being attended by 20 participants from Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Iran.

Dr. Mamser stated that modern training and development of human resources would positively impact rural communities.

CARDNE Director Amal Sabbagh also addressed the opening session, outlining the objectives of the regional seminar and announcing that a workshop on training instructors in designing small-scale economic projects for rural regions as well as two regional seminars on combating poverty are slated to be held later this year.

The participants, Ms. Sabbagh stated, will participate in field work and interact with rural communities in Jordan to become acquainted with such locales' needs.

These programmes are designed to help those national authorities responsible for the development of rural regions, Ms. Sabbagh explained.

What's Going On

LIBYAN FILM FESTIVAL

"The Shipwreck" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Fouad-Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

CONCERT

Musical performance by the orchestra of the National Music Conservatory at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

"Women's Participation in Political Life" (in Arabic) by Dr. Najat Khalil at the American Centre, Abdoun at 6:00 p.m.

Slide lecture: "Performance Empires: The South Arabian Incense Route" by Jane Taylor at the Friends of Archaeology Centre (Tel. 696682) at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Drawings by the students of the Nazareth School for Girls at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 12.

*Fifth Book Exhibition at the Bishop's School, Jabal Amman, until May 15.

*Recent drawings and sculptures by Mona Saudi entitled "Petra Tablets" at her residence in Abdoun (Tel. 829700), until May 15.

*Works by contemporary painters from the Arab World at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until May 15.

*Works by Iraqi artist Nuri Al Rawi entitled "Departure of Innocence from the World" at Hamourabi Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until May 15.

*Bani Hamida spring exhibition entitled "Crossing Borders" (displaying rugs, cushions, runners, and wall hangings) at the Jordan Contractors Association's Building, Deir Al Ghabar (Tel. 658696), until May 18.

*Lithographs by Salam Kanaan at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani, (Tel. 681304) until May 13.

AI issues appeal for three women on death row

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amnesty International (AI) has issued an appeal on behalf of three women sentenced to death in November of last year, urging human rights activists to appeal to His Majesty King Hussein and members of the government to commute the sentences.

The first two, Amira Salem, 25, and Eidah Hussein, 25, were found guilty by the Criminal Court of killing, mutilating and decapitating Ms. Salem's husband Murad Yousef, 45, on April 10 of last year in his Mafrqa house.

The two were sentenced to death by the Criminal Court, which ruling was ratified by the Court of Cassation last March.

The human rights group appealed for the cessation of further executions in Jordan and requested that "the new cabinet work to abolish the death penalty."

According to court transcripts, Ms. Salem conspired to kill her husband as "he physically abused her

on regular basis and threatened to marry another woman and abandon her."

But a judicial source stated that Ms. Salem also killed her husband as he regularly brought other women to his house in her presence. "Investigations proved that the victim had a bad reputation and would bring women to his house in complete disregard of his wife's feelings, a factor which was not considered by the Court of Cassation," the judicial source, requesting anonymity, attested.

The court said that Ms. Salem asked her neighbour, Ms. Hussein to help kill her husband, a mechanic, in retribution for such abuse.

She purchased a gun three months prior to the murder, according to judicial transcripts.

The court affirmed that the two women planned to deceive Mr. Yousef by offering him Ms. Hussein as a mistress, rather than his marrying another woman and he agreed.

On the night of the murder, Ms. Hussein went to the couple's house and asked the victim to lay face

down on the couple's bed so she could undress while his wife watched.

"Ms. Hussein then drew a gun and shot him four times in the head and back. Subsequently, the two women sat, drank coffee and smoked cigarettes," court transcripts said.

The two women then mangled the man's body, placed it in plastic bags, burned the head and boiled it to conceal their crime, the court said.

Also last March, the Court of Cassation upheld the death sentence of a third woman, Raya Musa.

Ms. Musa, 35, was convicted of the premeditated murder of her 60-year old husband in Deir Ala' near Salt in January of last year.

AI affirmed that it is urging that the death sentence imposed on the three women be commuted.

Judicial sources have told the Jordan Times that nine people, including the three women, are currently on death row.

Three people have been executed in the Kingdom since the beginning of the year. Ten were executed last year for various crimes.

Russian TV crew seized in breakaway Chechenya

MOSCOW (R) — Armed gunmen have seized a Russian television crew in the breakaway region of Chechenya, posing a new challenge for the separatist leadership in the run-up to talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

An official from NTV commercial television said the crew — two men and a woman — were seized Saturday afternoon near the village of Samashki, some 30 kilometres west of the regional capital Grozny.

It was the latest in a string of kidnappings in the volatile trans-Caucasus region, where 21 months of war between the separatists and Russian soldiers left a legacy of bitterness and a region swarming with heavily armed men.

First Deputy Prime Minister Movladi Udugov described the kidnappings as a threat to the peace process in the region.

"The Chechen leadership takes full responsibility for events taking place on the

territory of Chechenya and views the kidnapping of journalists as another mean and insidious challenge," he told Ekho Moskvy radio station.

"The response will be tough and cruel."

Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, elected in January, had expected to meet Russian President Boris Yeltsin later this month for talks on a lasting peace settlement.

The Chechens insist on independence for their territory, while Moscow, which says the talks may be postponed until next month, says Chechenya must remain part of the Russian Federation.

Russian authorities, worried by two fatal explosions at railway stations near the borders of Chechenya, fear the conflict could erupt again, and Mr. Udugov also expressed concern.

"The capture of people in Chechenya, including journalists, explosions at stations...and now the seizure

of a news team from NTV before the signature of important political and economic documents are links in the same chain," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted him as saying.

Four people died and many more were injured in last month's two bomb blasts.

Radical Chechen guerrilla Commander Salman Raduyev has claimed responsibility for the attacks, which he said were due to Moscow's refusal to recognise Chechen independence.

Commander Raduyev, Russia's most wanted man, told a rally in Grozny Saturday that "forceful pressure" was needed for Russia to recognise Chechenya.

"Until Russia has fully recognised Chechen independence, it is too early to lay aside our weapons," Interfax News Agency quoted him as saying.

Chechen officials said last Monday they had opened a criminal case against Commander Raduyev because of the blasts, but Culture Mi-

nister Ahmad Zakayev told Ekho Moskvy Saturday that no arrest warrant had been issued.

"This question has not even been discussed," Mr. Zakayev said, describing previous statements on a warrant as "irresponsible."

"Salman Raduyev is a national hero and our entire mutual relationship is primarily based on this," he said.

NTV said its crew had been returning to base with film of the Grozny rally of Raduyev's supporters when they were seized.

The kidnappers had not made any demands and NTV's efforts to contact the Chechen leadership to ask for help had not been successful so far.

Chechenya has become a difficult place for journalists to work and hostage taking is common. One group of reporters has already been held for more than three months, although other groups have been held and freed.



Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto inspects the battered ceiling of the reception room where rebels were playing soccer as Peruvian troops exploded out of tunnels to free the hostages at the Japanese ambassador's residence on April 22. Mr. Hashimoto is on a 20-hour visit to Peru to thank President Alberto Fujimori for resolving the hostage crisis and to offer condolences for the victims killed in the storming of the residence (Reuters photo)

Japanese prime minister thanks Peru for 'admirable' siege end

LIMA (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto met Peru's President Alberto Fujimori Saturday and formally thanked him for an "admirable" hostage rescue that ended a 126-day standoff with rebels at his ambassador's home.

Mr. Hashimoto told reporters the crisis strengthened ties between the two nations and emphasised the international community's determination not to give in to terrorism.

"I expressed my high regard and deep thanks to President Fujimori for concluding the rescue operation admirably. I am convinced that the ties between Japan and Peru have been strengthened through this incident," Mr. Hashimoto said after his four-hour meeting at government palace.

At their fourth meeting in less than a year, Mr. Hashimoto also invited Mr. Fujimori to visit Japan "as soon as possible."

Mr. Hashimoto said he regretted that three Peruvians — a former hostage and two commandos — died in the military's April 22 rescue raid that freed 71 captives from 14 rebels who had stormed a reception in honour of Japan's Emperor Akihito.

Mr. Fujimori called the three dead men "Peru's new heroes," but also said he was sorry the young, jungle-trained Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) rebels died in the assault.

Mr. Hashimoto said he regretted Lima did not warn him of the lightning strike that was technically on Japanese territory. But Mr. Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants, said that throughout the siege the prime minister showed full confidence in Peru and this encouraged him at the decisive moment he ordered the attack.

Both governments now say the crisis cemented their ties. But during the four-month siege relations were often strained as Mr. Hashimoto persistently called on Mr. Fujimori to curb his hawkish tendencies and pressed for a negotiated solution.

While Tokyo accepted it shared responsibility for the weak security at the ambassador's home, it also faulted Peru for failing to gather intelligence information that might have prevented the rebels' attack.

Determined to avoid the sort of lapse that allowed the rebels to take over the fortified diplomatic compound, Peru provided Mr. Hashimoto during his one-day trip with the tightest security seen in Lima for years.

Two police helicopters tracked the Japanese leader's every move and police snipers watched his entry to government palace from nearby roofs and a neighbouring church belfry.

After his meeting with Mr. Fujimori, Mr. Hashimoto visited the burned-out shell of Tokyo's once-elegant diplomatic residence. The prime minister stepped gingerly through the foul-smelling, charred mansion, whose black walls and ceilings were riddled with bullet marks, a Reuters photographer accompanying Mr. Hashimoto said.

The prime minister then sedately strolled through the dry, untended gardens beneath a now dirty white marquee and passed by the still upturned tables and battered Christmas tree used to decorate the ambassador's ill-fated lavish cocktail party.

Earlier, Mr. Hashimoto visited in his hospital bed Peru's star hostage in the crisis, Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela, who was operated on for a bullet wound in his ankle. The minister apologised to Mr. Hashimoto for not wearing a suit, according to a Japanese diplomatic statement.

The former rebels' prize captive took advantage of the media's attention on Mr. Hashimoto's visit to the military hospital to slip out of a side-door with his wife and return home for the first time in four months.

Mr. Hashimoto also used his one-day trip to decorate the Peruvian troops who took part in the rescue raid and placed flowers on the graves of the hostage and commandos who died in last month's assault.

Initial acclaim for the explosive raid, launched during a rebel soccer game from tunnels dug under the mansion, quickly waned following reports that troops executed at least two rebels during the attack.

But Mr. Fujimori's decision to attack freed Mr. Hashimoto from an apparently no-win situation where he tried to balance Japan's deep-seated pacifism with the public's growing demand for tougher crisis management from his governments.

Mr. Hashimoto's support has surged in the polls after his crisis debut due to his perceived reliable leadership. But Mr. Fujimori, who has built his reputation on strong-arm tactics against Peru's guerrillas, has fallen back dramatically in the popularity ratings after an initial surge following the rescue.

Trade and drug-trafficking dominate Caribbean summit

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados (R) — The United States and 15 Caribbean nations agreed Saturday to boost trade and fight narcotics but their one-day summit yielded few tangible results and no solution to a slippery banana exports dispute.

The summit, the first held in the Caribbean to include a U.S. president, seemed designed as much to reassure the region of the United States' continued interest as to make progress on the agenda, which covered trade, law enforcement and migration.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, 13 of the 14 members of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) that hosted the summit, and two associate members — the Dominican Republic and Haiti — signed a 30-page document pledging to work on the issues, but offering few hard commitments.

On his final stop after a five-day tour of Latin America, Mr. Clinton noted he had proposed legislation to

the U.S. Congress in February seeking to boost trade in the region by expanding the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI).

The CBI enhancement would provide \$2 billion over five years to lower tariffs to the area but would fall short of the Caribbean desire for parity with the North American Free Trade Agreement linking Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Mr. Clinton, a Democrat, admitted that helping the Caribbean via the CBI depended on the agreement of the Republican-led Congress, but said he hoped this would be possible.

"I think that everyone understands, and I made it clear in our meeting, that all I could do was ask the Congress for support," Mr. Clinton told a news conference after the meeting.

The importance of trade to the region was underlined by the dispute over bananas resulting from a World Trade Organisation decision

against a European licensing system giving preferences to firms that distribute and market bananas.

The United States claimed that the licensing system took business away from U.S. marketing and distribution companies and gave it to European firms.

Caribbean nations fear that as a result of the WTO decision — which pertains only to the marketing and distribution of the fruit, not to where it is produced — they may lose duty-free access for their bananas to the European Union (EU).

"Not surprisingly, we spent some time on the issue of bananas," Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson told the news conference. "For many of our countries, bananas is to us what cars are to Detroit."

Mr. Clinton sought to reassure them on this point, saying that the United States does not object to the duty-free access and that he would raise the issue with EU leaders later in May.

Albanian parties work to meet poll deadline

TIRANA (R) — Albania's main political parties met European election experts Sunday to try to thrash out a new electoral law before the Monday deadline they agreed in a joint political contract.

The six-point contract, brokered by European envoy Franz Vranitzky and signed by the 10 main parties last Friday, commits them to a final decision by Monday on the law laying out the form of the vote.

The deal, which Mr. Vranitzky called a breakthrough, is meant to put back on track the early elections agreed to halt Albania's drift to anarchy last March, when widespread riots erupted after the collapse of Pyramid savings schemes.

"They have all seen that if they want to go on with the stabilisation of their country and in a positive economic way which needs very substantial help from the world, they will have to follow the contract," European Ambassador Herbert Gruhmayer told Reuters Sunday.

"If someone tries to jump off the boat, it will have very negative consequences," said Mr. Gruhmayer, the ambassador of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Mr. Gruhmayer said his election experts were meeting separately with the main parties to draw up a compromise election law that will incorporate a mix of proportional representation and simple majority voting.

A dispute over the balance of the two systems between President Sali Berisha's Democratic Party and the rest of the nine-party government of national reconciliation had threatened to scupper the election.

The Democrats had wanted most of the seats to be chosen by majority, as in the last general elections in May 1996 when they won 122 of the 140 seats in parliament. International observers said that vote was flawed and the opposition Socialists pulled out late on polling day.

The rest of the government wants more seats to be chosen by proportional representation to allow the smaller parties a voice in parliament.

Interim Prime Minister Bashkim Fino, who left Saturday for an official visit to the United States, is expected back in time for the adoption of the new law by parliament and President Berisha's decree ordering the election.

Mr. Berisha will have to issue the decree by Thursday, May 15, in order for the election to go ahead on June 29 as envisaged. Under Albanian law, the president must call an election at least 45 days before voting takes place.

The other main stumbling block to the election process is the so-called Salvation Committees, citizens' groups set up in southern Albania after the riots to restore order.

Mr. Berisha's Democrats say they are the armed wing of the Socialist Party, but the Socialists deny they have anything to do with them.

The groups themselves say their only political role is to press for the resignation of Mr. Berisha, who they blame for the collapse of the Pyramid schemes, and the return of the funds to investors. Southern residents say the influence of the committees is on the wane.

The political contract stipulates that the committees must be dissolved 46 days before the election is held — next Wednesday, May 14 if the vote is to be kept on track.

The contract does not make clear who will certify if the committees have dissolved.

Pakistan expels former Afghan ally

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — The Pakistan government has ordered Haji Abdul Qadir, the former governor of Afghanistan's Nangarhar province and a powerful commander with the anti-Taliban alliance, to leave the country.

In an interview Saturday with The Associated Press, Mr. Qadir said he has been told to leave Pakistan before Monday. He says his expulsion is an attempt to weaken the anti-Taliban alliance.

There was no immediate comment from the Pakistan government, but it is widely believed that Pakistan is a strong supporter of the Taliban.

In recent weeks Mr. Qadir's fighters have been waging a ferocious battle against the Taliban in Afghanistan's northeastern Kunar province, which neighbours Pakistan.

"The authorities told me I had to leave because of the trouble we were causing the Taliban," Mr. Qadir said.

Mr. Qadir has had a home in the Pakistani frontier city of Peshawar since 1979 when Soviet soldiers invaded Afghanistan. Mr. Qadir was a leading figure in the Muslim resistance that eventually forced the Rus-

sians to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1989.

When Afghanistan's Communist government fell in 1992, Mr. Qadir took control of Nangarhar province until the Taliban threw him out last year.

The Taliban espouse a strict interpretation of Islam which bans women from the workforce, girls form school and forces men to grow a beard. It also outlawed music, videos and most games.

The Taliban has swept through roughly two-thirds of Afghanistan. The remaining one-third of the country is ruled by the anti-Taliban alliance, led by northern warlord Rashid Dostum and Kabul's former military chief Ahmad Shah Massoud.

The Taliban rulers say they want complete control of the country to impose their version of Islam. The others profess a more moderate version, but lost the support of many Afghans when they turned their guns on each other in a bitter battle for power following the fall of the Communist government in 1992.

Now Mr. Qadir said people are fed up with the

Taliban's harsh rule.

"The Taliban is ruining our country," he said. "It is our duty to save our homeland."

However he didn't say where he would go and whether he would continue his battle against the Taliban.

Meanwhile, The presidents of Iran and Tajikistan and former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani appealed Saturday to the Taliban to negotiate a ceasefire.

Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani of Iran, Emomali Rakhmonov of Tajikistan and Mr. Rabbani had "judged it necessary for all parties to the Afghan conflict to sit down at the negotiating table," Tajik Foreign Minister Tolbak Nazarov told journalists.

The three leaders called for "a peaceful solution to the crisis with the participation of all political forces including the Taliban," Mr. Nazarov said.

Iran and Tajikistan, both of which share a border with Afghanistan, are concerned about the potential consequences for them if the Taliban should win a military victory in Afghanistan.

Pakistan jail rioters tear-gassed

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistani police fired tear gas and made baton charges Saturday to quell a jail riot apparently linked to Muslim sectarian violence in the country, the jail's chief said.

Adiala Central Jail Superintendent Abdul Sattar, quoted by the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), said about 50 people, including policemen and prisoners, were injured in the clash.

He said the riot started after about 250 prisoners forced their way out of their

barracks and beat their chests to mark the advent of the Muslim mourning month of Muharram.

"Other prisoners also joined them and complicated the situation," he said.

Prisoners who beat their chests included Shiites arrested in a police crackdown against sectarian militants, jail sources said. Their demonstration seemed to be a protest against the crackdown.

Prisoners burnt down the record and attendance regis-

ter of their barracks and threw stones at jail staff, Mr. Sattar said.

Additional police were called in and "the police resorted to tear-gas shelling and baton charges to disperse the unruly mob."

Police in the central province of Punjab, where Adiala is located, have arrested hundreds of militants of the majority Sunni and the minority Shiite sects after a series of gun attacks in which several members of both sects were killed.

Washington asks Pakistan to release U.S. drugs agent

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — The United States Sunday urged Pakistan to release a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agent seized last month after the arrest of a Pakistani Air Force officer in New York.

"The U.S. government has expressed its strong concerns and urged his release while Pakistan's investigation continues," a U.S. embassy statement said.

The Pakistan government had provided "assurances" that the agent, Ayaz Baluch, was being "well-treated" and that his case would be handled in accordance with Pakistani law, it added.

"Lure and trap" Pakistan Air Force (PAF) officers. Neither the Pakistan government nor the military has so far commented on the report.

Islamabad had previously said Mr. Baluch was arrested on "charges of involvement in drug trafficking and anti-state activities."

A Foreign Office spokesman has denied a Washington Times report quoting unidentified U.S. officials as saying Mr. Baluch's arrest was a retaliatory measure and amounted to "hostage-taking."

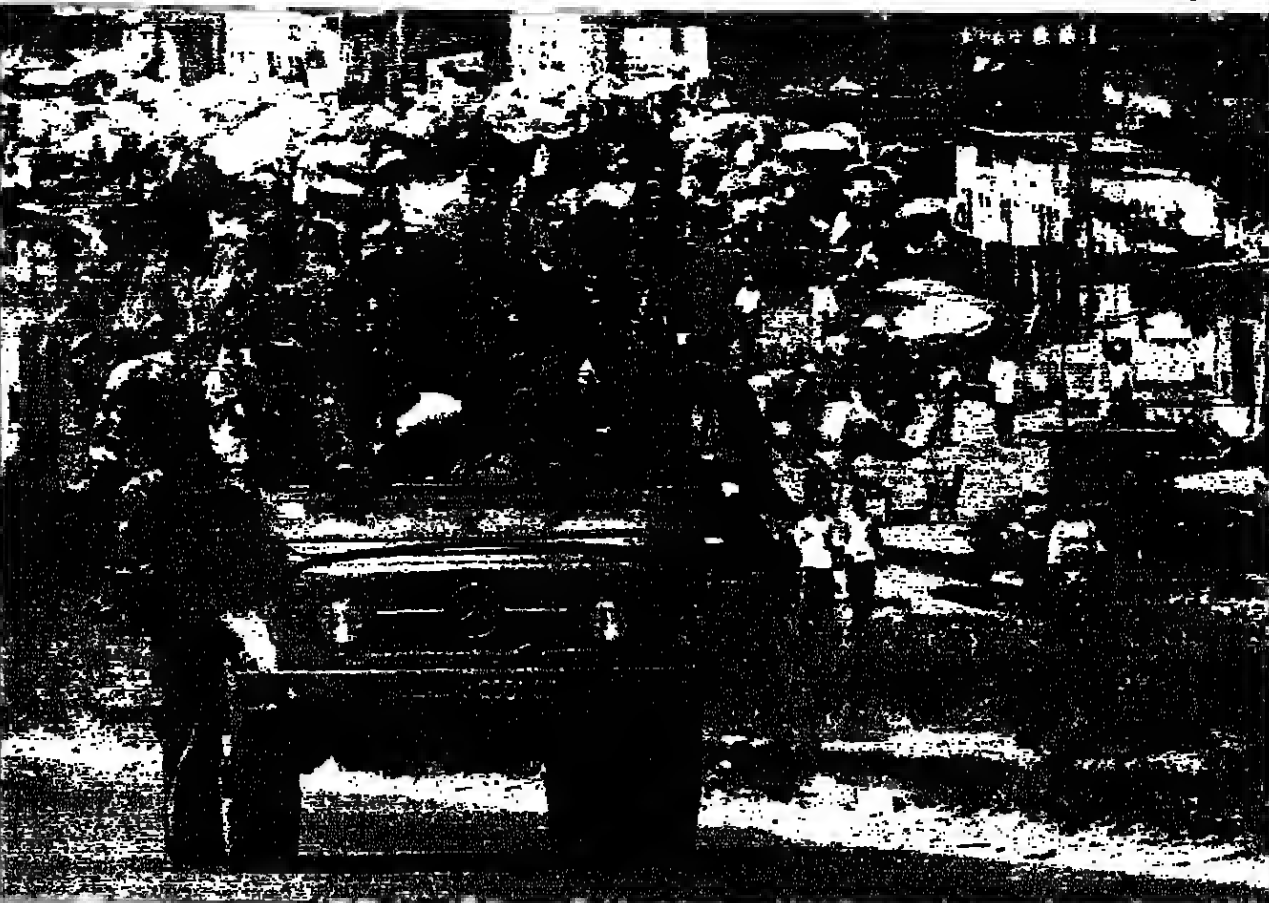
Squadron Leader Farooq Ahmad Khan, was held in New York on April 14 for allegedly trying to sell two kilograms of heroin. Another PAF squadron leader, Qasim Bhatti, was

arrested by authorities in Pakistan.

The American embassy statement said the U.S. government did not view the arrest of the two officers on narcotics charges as an "indictment" of the Pakistani Air Force.

It said Islamabad and Washington were "in close communication" regarding the investigation and prosecution of the two officers and had "assured" each other of "full cooperation" in the matter.

The News said Sunday an official protest had been lodged with Washington over the manner in which the two PAF officers were trapped with the help of Ayaz Baluch without informing the Pakistani authorities.



A truckload of Zairean soldiers drive down a highway leading into Kinshasa from the east. President Mobutu Sese Seko returned to Zaire Saturday after attending a summit of African leaders in Gabon. (Reuters photo)

8,000 ask for amnesty in S. Africa

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Almost 8,000 people applied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa for amnesty for political crimes committed during the apartheid era, before the deadline for applications expired at midnight Saturday.

"It has been a heavy burden," said Mary Burton, a member of the TRC, at the end of a day on which more than 1,000 last-minute applications were received.

All day TRC offices were deluged with visitors and calls on fax and telephone hotlines. Mokotedi Mpshe, who is responsible for TRC investigations in Cape Town region said the number of amnesty applicants was "much more than I expected."

Former secret police chief, Colonel Eugene De Kock was among those who waited until the last minute to put in his application. His lawyer arrived Saturday evening at TRC offices in Johannesburg. Col. De Kock was sentenced last year to several life terms for his actions under the apartheid regime.

Amnesty will be granted to all those who confess to human rights abuses and political crimes committed between 1960 and 1994 and

who can prove that they were ideologically motivated. Those who have failed to apply, face penal or civil charges.

Since the TRC was set up last year, 39 amnesties have been granted and 788 requests rejected.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) which has taken collective responsibility for violence committed as part of its campaign to end apartheid has submitted the highest number of applications of all the political parties, the TRC said.

The National Party which ruled from 1948 to 1994 opted instead for individual responsibility. Only two former ministers have come forward; Adriaan Vlok formerly responsible for law and order and Piet Koomhof, former "Bantu affairs" minister.

The Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party has stayed aloof from the amnesty proceedings. Its leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said Saturday that there was "no reason" for him to seek an amnesty. He has criticised the TRC as being biased in favour of the ANC.

ANC leaders who have applied for amnesty are Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who led the anti-apar-

theid struggle from exile, Defence Minister Joe Modise, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and Mpumalanga provincial Premier Mathews Phosa.

ANC spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said Saturday the party had appealed to all its cadres involved in the anti-apartheid struggle to seek amnesty where necessary.

Commission Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu Friday expressed concern at the dearth of applications from Inkatha which since 1987 has been engaged in a bloody power struggle with the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal.

"They are missing out on a wonderful opportunity of bringing down the curtain on a horrendous period of our history," Arch. Tutu said.

Commission officials also said only a handful of former South African soldiers had taken up the offer of an amnesty.

Former defence minister, in the apartheid era, Magnus Malan, said this week that he knew of no military operation which could be interpreted as a political crime.

Secret raids against ANC bases outside South Africa's borders were carried out under state authority, he said.

U.K.'s Hague pledges Conservative revamp

LONDON (R) — William Hague, fresh-faced front-runner in the battle to be Britain's new Conservative leader, Sunday pledged to revamp the demoralised party after its crushing election defeat.

"We must be prepared to change anything and everything except our core principles," said the 36-year-old former Welsh secretary who made light of his relative youth as he has been a party activist since his teenage years.

Mr. Hague, arguing that he had more experience in government than Labour's new Prime Minister Tony Blair, told BBC Television: "If you are good enough, you are old enough."

But the Conservatives, hit by a string of scandals and bitterly divided over Britain's role in Europe, face five gruelling years in opposition after suffering their worst election defeat since 1932.

Opinion pollsters and bookmakers both make Mr. Hague favourite in the six-horse race to replace John Major, who announced his decision to step down after his crushing election defeat on May 1.

Mr. Hague, like his fellow contender, former Interior Minister Michael Howard, opposed Britain joining a single European currency.

Whoever wins the leadership battle later this summer needs above all to heal party wounds and both Mr. Howard and Mr. Hague agreed the shell-shocked party had some tough lessons to learn after its drubbing.

"We suffered a great defeat 10 days ago. The people are our masters and they have spoken. We must set about the task of rebuilding with a sense of humility," Mr. Howard told BBC interviewer Sir David Frost.

While the Conservatives rebuild their shattered morale, Labour has fulfilled its promise to "land running" with a political revolution both at home and abroad.

New Finance Minister Gordon Brown won plaudits from financial markets when giving the Bank of England the power in future to fix interest rates.

Next in line is what is being billed as the most radical welfare budget in Britain of the past 50 years.

Mr. Brown has pledged to bring in a windfall tax on the privatised utility companies to finance back-to-work projects for the young and long-time unemployed.

Interviewed by the Observer newspaper, Mr. Brown said he had instructed treasury officials to start a fundamental review of public spending. He is also keen to encourage higher investment and more long-term share ownership.

Zaire moves a small step forward; rebels do likewise

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire moved a tentative step closer to peace Sunday as President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel chief Laurent Kabila agreed to meet again and parliament chose a speaker who may serve as interim head of state.

However, doubt surrounded Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo's willingness to take up the job of speaker, from which he was ousted two years ago by an unholy alliance of Mobutu supporters and opposition radicals.

Speaking to reporters in Brussels, Arch. Monsengwo, who is archbishop of the northeastern city of Kisangani, said he was still undecided since being elected by deputies in a vote Saturday.

He linked his acceptance of the speaker's position to a package of national and international guarantees, as well as approval from the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church in Zaire.

The archbishop cannot afford to stall for long, however. The agreement to meet again in Congo Wednesday for South African-brokered peace talks buys just a few more days' grace for Kinshasa, with Mr. Kabila's rebels now claiming to be within 60 kilometres.

A Western analyst in Kinshasa said Mr. Kabila's forces would likely press on for a few days and stop menacingly before the capital.

"Firstly, he is going to want to consolidate his strength after the fighting for Kenge, which he did not expect, and (secondly) he will wait for the results of his meeting (with Mobutu)," he said.

The rebels have captured at least two-thirds of the vast, resource-rich and strategic Central African country since launching their offensive to topple Mr. Mobutu.

But they ran into fierce government resistance at Kenge, 200 kilometres east of the capital, and reportedly suffered heavy losses.

The rebels want Mr. Mobutu to resign and transfer power immediately to Mr. Kabila's rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, ruling out the necessity for Arch. Monsengwo's interim stewardship.

The archbishop, who



Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo speaks at a news conference Sunday in Brussels during a stopover on his way back to Kinshasa from the Vatican where he attended a conference. Arch. Monsengwo, who was voted Saturday as speaker of the transitional parliament in Zaire, said he would accept the post provided certain conditions were met. (Reuters photo)

enjoys enormous popularity, said Sunday he would return shortly to Kinshasa and announce his decision then.

Mr. Mobutu returned Saturday to Kinshasa from a regional summit in Libreville where he met South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and agreed to meet Mr. Kabila Wednesday.

Mr. Mbeki had earlier won Mr. Kabila's assent for the face-to-face meeting on a South African naval ship, the second time the two leaders will have met after inconclusive talks on May 4.

French centre-right widens lead, left hones attack

PARIS (R) — Socialist leader Lionel Jospin escalated his campaign rhetoric Saturday as a new poll showed France's governing centre-right widening its lead over the left just two weeks before a snap parliamentary election.

The IFOP poll for the weekly Le Journal Du Dimanche found the current majority growing in strength over the leftist opposition, and gave it a significantly larger share of seats in the parliament than a similar poll conducted a week earlier.

The gains capped a week of unease for the centre-right over earlier polls showing the left growing stronger and a growing chorus of majority voices attacking conservative Prime Minister Alain Juppe for lacklustre campaign leadership.

The two-round poll is set for May 25 and June 1. Mr. Jospin stepped up his attacks on the majority a day after Mr. Juppe, leader of the Gaullist RPR Party, said he hoped to steer the campaign debate towards

unemployment and other key voter concerns and away from mud-slinging.

"The balance sheet of our adversaries is bad, their plans are virtually non-existent, but they are content to criticise our ideas. They are behaving like the opposition to the opposition," Mr. Jospin said in Nailloux, southwestern France.

"If this election took place today, based on the popularity of the government and its current leader, there would be no doubt of the outcome," Mr. Jospin told a Socialist rally. "The question is whether the French people want a new majority."

Mr. Juppe had said he wanted the campaign "to change tone."

"Over the past two weeks it has largely consisted of personal attacks and partisan jibes. The time for such behaviour is over," Mr. Juppe told France 3 Television.

The latest poll was particularly welcome news for the centre-right as it followed closely on the heels of Gaullist President

Jacques Chirac's first formal appeal to support the centre-right and reject the Socialist alternative.

In an opinion article in regional newspapers, Mr. Chirac said his government had had to "wipe the slate clean" after years of Socialist misrule and urged voters to give him the "political stability indispensable for effective action."

Curiously, however, the poll found that just 40 per cent of voters were pleased by Mr. Chirac's campaign role, compared to 43 per cent unhappy over his performance and 17 per cent with no opinion.

Mr. Chirac sent shock waves through French politics when he decided last month to dissolve parliament and hold an election nine months early despite a huge majority in the National Assembly.

His gamble was beginning to look foolish as the left, rising in the polls, painted the move as a bid for a "blank cheque" for five more years of uninterrupted power and more govern-

ment austerity in a drive to help France qualify for European Monetary Union.

On Saturday evening, however, a beaming Chirac went to Paris' Parc Des Princes Stadium to watch the French Cup Final.

Millions of French voters looked on via live television as Mr. Chirac shook hands with both teams in front of a wildly cheering crowd.

Hoping to smooth over a widening rift with the Communists, whose votes would be needed for the left to win though they differ on European Monetary Union, Mr. Jospin said Communist candidates were "competitors" but not "adversaries" in the campaign.

"For the time being, let's focus on the first round of the election," he added.

Communist leader Robert Hue tried to raise the stakes on the Socialists, saying a leftist government should pledge to create 1.5 million new jobs in two years. The Socialists have promised to create 700,000 new jobs to combat France's record 12.8 per cent unemployment.

Europeans meet over defence

PARIS (R) — Foreign and defence ministers from 28 European countries met in Paris Monday to examine ways of taking on a greater role in the security of their own continent.

The meeting, under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU), will examine detailed proposals of how European nations could use U.S. equipment, currently attached to NATO, for European-only operations.

That issue — how to have a separate European defence identity from Washington while still enjoying its support — goes to the heart of the debate over future European security.

"We cannot remain dependent on the U.S. lead for any and all military operations," WEU Secretary-General Jose Cutileiro told reporters last week.

Mr. Cutileiro said the WEU — designated since 1991 as the European Union's defence arm — must develop an operational capability to allow Europe to act with one voice on security issues.

He criticised "coalitions of the willing," when a group of countries simply decide to act together on a bilateral basis as some are currently doing in Albania and on the border with Zaire, as undermining a collective European alternative.

"Such coalitions, based as they are on the special interests of its members, erode the principle of European solidarity on which the process of

European integration must be based," he added.

Britain and France, the only two European Union members with armies capable of mounting substantial long-term "out of theatre" operations, have recently moved much closer to each other on defence issues.

France, pushed by its experiences in the Gulf War and Bosnia and the spiralling cost of defence equipment, has dropped ideas of trying to create a separate European defence role around the WEU.

Britain, a staunch advocate of the trans-Atlantic link, has never looked favourably on any independent European initiatives, arguing the U.S. and its allies can only be effective — as in Bosnia — when they work together.

Under a complicated formula known as Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFS), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has agreed to loan its equipment to the WEU for European-only operations.

In return for Washington's backing for the creation of a real European security identity within the U.S.-dominated Atlantic alliance, France has said it will return to the military wing of the alliance it quit in 1966.

Many problems remain to be sorted out — most notably the degree of control NATO countries would have over so-called "assets" loaned to the WEU.

"Much of this debate is theoretical at the moment, no-one thinks the WEU would undertake anything except the most limited type of operations, but it is potentially very important for the future," said one NATO official.

The 10 current WEU members — Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and Greece — are all also members of NATO.

The other 18 states participating in the Paris meeting, including former neutrals and countries from former Communist Europe are linked through partnership and association accords.

French officials have been telling journalists that, since Jan. 1 when France's six-month WEU presidency began, agreements have been made "in principle" for the transfer of NATO assets to the WEU when needed.

But when pressed, the officials acknowledged no specifics have been laid down and there is a wall of resistance from the Pentagon which wants to keep minute-to-minute control over American equipment, its deployment and use.

But the issue still hangs on such obvious hurdles as Washington's likely reluctance to place U.S. transport aircraft or helicopter crews in combat zones, especially under foreign command, should the White House and Congress want to steer clear of fighting there.

China dons kid gloves as H. Kong handover nears

HONG KONG (R) — He was stiff and formal. A script rested on the table in front of him, taking the spontaneity out of the event.

But China's President Jiang Zemin nevertheless took a step that his predecessors would have found unthinkable: he faced the unblinking eye of a Western television camera for an interview beamed around the world.

Mr. Jiang's appearance on Cable News Network (CNN) Friday, and his soothing comments on Hong Kong, highlighted a softening in China's approach toward the territory it will soon reclaim.

As the clock ticks down on more than 150 years of British colonial rule, China is stepping up the battle for the hearts and minds of the 6.4 million Hong Kong residents who will once again become Chinese subjects on July 1.

Mr. Jiang told CNN that even he, the most powerful

man in China, would not be above Hong Kong law when he set foot in Hong Kong.

Fears over the rule of law in Hong Kong have been stoked by the establishment of a China-backed provisional legislature to replace the present elected body and plans to water down civil rights in the territory.

But China has stopped its vilification of Chris Patten, the 28th and last British governor of Hong Kong who introduced democratic reforms vehemently opposed by China and which triggered China's moves to replace the current legislature.

Ounce denounced as a "political prostitute" and a "criminal for 10,000 years", the verdict on Mr. Patten was revised last week by China's bardic envoy to Hong Kong.

Zhou Nan, sent to Hong Kong in 1989 after his predecessor defected to the United States following the bloody suppression of stu-

dent-led demonstrators in Beijing, told Hong Kong journalists last week that Mr. Patten was not to blame for the Sino-British row over his democratic reforms.

It was London's misguided policy, not Mr. Patten, that was to blame, said Mr. Zhou — the director of the Xinhua news agency which serves as China's de facto diplomatic mission in Hong Kong.

Another Chinese olive branch was extended when the leaders of colonial trading giant Jardine Matheson, once labelled the "black sheep of business," were welcomed in Beijing last week.

Mr. Jardine has long been China's whipping boy. Its 19th century roots as an opium trader were found up in the British seizure of Hong Kong from a weak China in 1841.

With the ink on the 1984 Sino-British handover treaty barely dry, Jardine became the first company to

shift its domicile out of Hong Kong.

Virtually every other major Hong Kong-listed company, including major Chinese-run firms, has followed suit and relocated their legal domiciles to Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and other tax havens.

But Mr. Jardine's expression of unease over the handover rankled with Beijing and its subsequent delisting from the Hong Kong stock market was seen as another insult.

So were comments by a senior company executive expressing support for Mr. Patten's democracy reforms.

Beijing retaliated by blocking a lucrative container terminal contract awarded by the government to Jardine, triggering concerns about politicisation and Cronism creeping into Hong Kong's relatively level business playing field.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

مجلس التحرير يجرى اجتماعه لبحث المسألة الفلسطينية

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Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Priority for education

TO STATE that education is the basis upon which the progress of any nation depends is to state the obvious. Examples of nations, past and present, which education changed their fortunes and destinies abound. In recent history the experiences of Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, to name only a few, are the best proof that, unless education systems continue to be vibrant, receptive and open to change, national progress will continue to elude all those who yearn for it.

Here in Jordan we have recognised the importance of reforming and invigorating all education systems since the seventies. His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan waste no opportunity to remind our governments of this noble task. Numerous studies have been conducted on reforming both basic and higher education. The problem so far seems to be two-fold: One is financial and the other bureaucratic. The financial problem is, of course, the most important one.

The state caters for an army of school and university students which exceeds 1.2 million. In a study early this decade it was announced that basic education for one student costs the state budget JD121. This compares with \$5,000 in Sweden, for example. The comparison is not fair; but neither is the state of affairs promising. If we really are sincere in our effort we are obligated to take strategic decisions by which funds must be transferred from non-productive sectors to that of education.

On the bureaucratic level we continue to hear much about reform but see very little of it, especially in the area of curriculum development. The complaints that we have been witnessing about rote education, about lack of creative thinking, to give only two examples, are still with us. Heavy ideological teaching at a very tender age is still the norm at school. Art, music, basic motor skills, basic thinking and reasoning skills are almost entirely absent from the schools. Even private schools are allowed only little leeway in the instruction of their students.

Furthermore, the educational system lacks a clear vision of its aims and objectives and fails to prod students to think and reason or to arm them with the required skills that meet the needs of the labour market.

What is really needed at this stage is the fusion of a new blood into the ranks of leading educationalists and the involvement of experts from specialised international organisations and developed countries in the effort to modernise our educational system.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i demanded that the Palestine National Authority (PNA) put on trial all Arabs who sell their land to Israelis and apply capital punishment in their case. Selling of Arab land to Israel is a treason committed against the whole Palestinian nation and the future generations, said Fakhri Kawar, who said that quite a good number of people have already sold land and houses to middlemen who, in turn, transferred ownership to Jews. A statement by Freih Abu Medin, the Palestinian minister of justice, that those who sell land and other real estate to the Israelis will be put on trial is a welcome decision though it came late because a great deal of land has been sold in the past three years, since the conclusion of the Oslo deal between Israel and the Palestinian leadership, said the writer. However, he said, the PNA should not accept the pretext of some landowners, including a member of the PNA, who claim that they have sold lands to Arabs and not the Jews, and should ascertain that the land does not fall in the hands of Israelis. The writer demanded that not only middle men who buy Arab lands in order to sell them to Israelis be put on trial but also land owners who sell the lands knowing that they will eventually find their way to the Jews.

A WRITER for Al Aswaq daily discussed the question of artesian wells which, he said, are too many and tend to further drain the underground water resources in Jordan. Ahmad Dabbas said that under the previous government administrations, many influential people succeeded in getting licences for drilling wells and siphoning off water to irrigate their own lands, satisfying their own interests only and not caring for the national interest, at a time when the country lacks the minimum water requirements for the public's different needs. The writer said many instances of corruption and abuse of public position have been committed in the past and many practices by irresponsible people and abuse of the land and the aquifers were condoned by previous administrations. Now that the minister of water and irrigation has announced that strict measures will be applied against the violators of the regulations concerning water use, the public is looking forward to seeing some action taken to put matters right, he said. By pillaging the underground water resources, these irresponsible people have deprived the nation of one of its most basic components for survival, said the writer who demanded that no matter how influential these people are, they all ought to be held accountable for their actions.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Strategy to enhance social productivity

THE STRATEGY for enhancing social productivity and alleviating the impact of poverty in Jordan has finally been completed. The fact that a strategy is presently in place is heart warming to those who monitor the growth and development of Jordan. However, championing the cause of the poor is a big responsibility and the plan will require the integrated input of all Jordanians and their friends for an extended period of time. Unfortunately, there are no quick, permanent solutions.

Poverty in Jordan is a problem; however, it is not a problem that has to stay, especially since some of the indicators are positive and show possible solutions to what had seemed as terminal illnesses in the past. For example, the size of the household decreased from 7.2 people in 1989 to 6.6 in 1995. The trend is that this number will go down as industrialisation takes a stronger hold on the economy and birth control becomes more prevalent.

On the other hand, the abject poverty line which stood at JD 40.5 per person in 1989 increased to JD 67.0 in 1995. The percentage of households below the abject poverty line increased from 1.5 per cent in 1989 to 8.9 per cent in 1995. Over one fifth of the population lives below the absolute poverty line. Something has to be done, and it has to be done fast.

The government strategy addresses the poverty alleviation first, while providing expedient remedies and without ignoring the causes of poverty and lack of social productivity. On the immediate horizon, financial subsidies are provided to the poor, the environment of poor neighbourhoods is to be improved, small-scale labour-intensive projects are created and strengthened, and on-the-job training is subsidised to bring more Jordanians into the labour force, especially in the low or intermediate skill job market — the latter is complemented by the recent changes in the labour law that limit the entry of foreign labour into several professions in the country.

In the long run, health care, education, information technology, infrastructure and management are all to be enhanced and expanded. The saying, "If it is broke, do not fix it," is not at work here; what is at work, is: If it is not broken improve it." Value added is the magical word — as it should be — behind all development efforts.

Furthermore, behind this whole strategy an information system there must be a first-class information system, that delineates the flow of information, to ensure the lack of duplication and waste. The ability to facilitate the flow of information among the various groups and parts of the overall programme is as important as finding the necessary financing or creating the good will needed to drive this project.

Most importantly, it should be in concord with the economic reform programme in order for both strategies to complement each other. For example, a strategy for addressing social productivity must be consistent with the strategy for enhancing the competitiveness of Jordan and the economic reform programme, which aim at rectifying the several distortions that plagued the market system in the past. In addition, the privatisation drive need not slow down or regress. On the contrary, it should be speedily implemented to create jobs in the liberalised sectors as monopolists are replaced by competitors.

Furthermore, the monetary stabilisation programme must go hand in hand with all of the above. Otherwise, a weakened dinar would trigger price increases, balance of payments deficits and destroy the real balances of the nation.

In short, all the strategies must work together to bring about greater social productivity. Better still, the diffusion of information at all levels will be the key to imparting the benefits of the programme to the greatest number of people and to those who need it the most.

India-Pakistan turning corner towards peace, democracy

By Gwynne Dyer

THE GOOD news that was not quite heard in April was the sound of gears changing as one of the most important regions in the world turned a corner towards peace and democracy. Both in India and in Pakistan (which together have as many people as China), the political system went through its most important test in years. And in both, it came out much strengthened.

That was not how the India governmental crisis was viewed when it first erupted on March 30. When Congress Party leader Sitaram Kesri withdrew his support from the governing coalition and forced Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's resignation, the "Indian Express" editorial writer, together with much of the rest of the Indian media, went into apocalyptic mode. "Nobody, not even Sitaram Kesri's quartet of dotting Pomeranians, would take his self-serving indictment of Gowda... seriously," the paper fulminated. "The time and manner in which it has been done... is shocking, and would further strengthen the anti-politician and, sadly, even anti-system mood, in a country held to ransom by politicians bankrupt of ideas or ideology."

India has been a democracy for fifty years, but for most of them it was effectively a one-party democracy dominated by the Congress Party that led the country to independence. In recent years, as India shifted towards a genuine multi-party political system and simultaneously started opening up its heavily regulated economy, there have been unprecedented strains. What the past month showed is that the system can withstand the strains.

Last year's election brought what seemed the worst possible outcome. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), deeply hostile to Pakistan and to India's own large Muslim minority, came first, though falling far short of a majority. Congress, to the shock of its leaders, came second. The largest block of seats went to 13 smaller groupings ranging from free-marketiers and regional parties to communists, who called themselves the United Front.

But it all worked out fine. The BJP was invited to form a government as law and custom dictated, despite the repugnance its policies stir in most other political quarters. It then promptly lost a non-confidence vote and quit, again in strict compliance with the law. Whereupon the smaller parties were invited to form the government. Under the leadership of Deve Gowda, a politician from the southern state of

Karnataka with no previous national experience, the United Front took power. Congress, though still smarting from its loss of power, agreed to support it from outside, giving it enough votes to govern. And govern it did, with considerable success and to almost everybody's surprise, for ten months.

The 1997-98 budget pushed India's economic reforms to a new level of seriousness. Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral got talks going again with Pakistan after a long interval of sullen non-communication between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. In fact, it was all going so well that Congress felt obliged to pull the plug.

Welcome to the petty ambitions and major indignities of coalition politics. The Italians have been surviving this sort of thing for fifty years, but Indians are less used to it, and many feared a collapse of the whole system. Not at all. After 25 days of "crisis," the United Front was back in office, with only a different prime minister (former foreign minister I.K. Gujral) as a sop to Congress's pride. Even the cabinet has exactly the same people in it. Both the reforms, and the attempts to achieve reconciliation with Pakistan, continue.

"Small crisis, not many hurt." It is hard to turn all this into punchy headlines for a foreign audience, but we have just seen a key turning point in India's emergence, not just in rhetoric but in fact, as the world's largest democracy. Which would be enough glad tidings for one month even without the happy news from Pakistan: Nawaz Sharif's first act as prime minister, on April 1, was to repeal the eighth amendment to the constitution.

Pakistan has been ruled by generals for half of its 50-year history. The end of martial law in 1985 was accompanied by a law demanding by the then-military ruler, President Zia Al Haq, giving the president power to dismiss the prime minister and dissolve parliament virtually at will.

Zia is long gone now, but the law lingered on, blighting Pakistan's fledgling democracy. The last four elected prime ministers were all dismissed by the president (generally a crony of the generals) before the end of their terms. Indeed, it was the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto last November that precipitated early elections in Pakistan and brought Nawaz Sharif to power.

Yet almost the first thing Sharif did was to push a vote through Pakistan's parliament repealing the amendment. By last week he had even taken the step of ordering Pakistan's navy chief, Admiral Mansurul Haque, to resign after allegations of

corruption. These seem small things, but they are actually big things: From now on, Pakistan's soldiers will have to act more openly if they do not like the government the civilians elect. Pakistan is not a perfect democracy, but it is moving out of the fledgling stage.

There is even reason to hope that India and Pakistan may now move beyond the armed confrontation, punctuated by occasional wars, that has dominated their relationship for the past half-century. Both Sharif and Gujral say they want to end the confrontation: Gujral is publicly committed to opening up the India-Pakistan border for trade. They also have the

unusual tie of having grown up in the same city. (Gujral was born in Lahore, now in Pakistan, and fled at the age of 20 when British India was partitioned in 1947).

"History and time should have made it clear to both countries that the best option for us is to live in peace and harmony," Gujral said recently. "Our armies have charged a very heavy tax on both of us."

The two prime ministers met for the first time at the South Asian summit in the Maldives on May 12, at which point they will have to start putting some meaning into these fine words. But at least they are using the right words, and domestically they are doing the right things.

LETTERS

Precious people, 'cheap' water

To the Editor:

MY WIFE and I have travelled for three weeks throughout Jordan. After travelling for 2,000 km, we would like to communicate our impressions.

The great hospitality and the readiness to help — which your beloved king expects of his people — have impressed us deeply. We accepted many spontaneous invitations, thus having the opportunity to get to know the country and its inhabitants better.

To all the people who have helped us in any way we would like to express our gratitude through this letter. But we would also like to mention some critical impressions.

First, we noticed the careless handling of water. We were told that in 1955, the annual available per capita amount of water was approximately 1,300 cubic metres, whereas in 1990, it was only 460. That is why we do not understand why, for example, a hotel and a golf course had to be built in the Azraq desert. The Azraq oasis exists only by name; the trees disappeared, birds and wild animals are out to be seen, the ostriches are in locked enclosures. Like in a zoo, and foreigners have to pay a high admission fee for a non-existent reservation.

At the Dead Sea hotel, the water from the beach showers flows unused in to the sand, although it could be used to water the green areas.

New hotels along the Dead Sea will need more water. But if water is wasted like it is today, they will become ruins in about ten years. Why is the old technique of water harvesting not used? Or even part-time irrigation, instead of full-time irrigation?

The unequal distribution of precious water is a dangerous time bomb. Many see the water problem as the only thinkable reason for a possible conflict with Israel. It is certainly an annoyance that Israel takes — since 1967 — up to 40 per cent of its drinking water out of immense underground deposits west of Jordan.

We do not understand the handling of bread either. In the restaurants, huge amounts of bread are served, unequested, to the mezze or muqabalat, similarly, for breakfast, huge amounts, that cannot be eaten in this quantity, are served. We have seen many leftover bread on rubbish dumps, on roadsides, at picnic places and elsewhere. Why did the people demonstrate against the increase of the bread prices if bread is valued so little?

Nevertheless, I would like to finish the account of our journey on a positive note.

Jordan is a tolerant country. In Salt and Amman, as I am sure elsewhere, mosques and churches stand close together. The freedom of religion is another thing to be praised in the Kingdom.

Prof. Gunter Beger,
The School of Arts,
Bremen,
Germany

Human Rights File

Russia's day in court — candid and open

By Waleed Sadi

THE RUSSIAN Federation's report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was given centre stage by the 18 members of the committee during its current session. The Russian delegation admitted that the country went through many social and economic upheavals as a result of the rapid transformation of the state-run economy into market economy.

Judging from the submissions of the Russian representatives who presented their country's report, the post-Communist era witnessed seismic changes whose fallout continues to reverberate across the vast federation.

Instead of the sophisticated market economy that the West has been used to, the Russian style was more of a 19th century laissez-faire type. The immediate results were the eradication of the middle class, very high unemployment rate, corruption, crime, prostitution and drug-related problems on a scale that no other Western country has ever seen.

A sample of the mushrooming crises that Russia now faces is the chronic non-payment of wages.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions supplied the committee with an updated report on that issue that highlighted, inter alia, the following: 98,400 enterprises have been reported for non-payment of wages; workers in Volgograd have been paid in bras and shoes for three whole years; workers at the Textile Company in Ivanova have been paid in bed sheets; at the Moskvich Automobile Factory, workers have been paid in spare parts. Other information confirms that one of four Russian workers, in other words nearly 20 million people, are still waiting for their salaries. No wonder the Russian delegation was mercilessly bombarded with questions about the ill state of the Russian economy and the increasing number of human rights violations which ensued.

Other non-governmental organisations have also submitted evidence that Russia flouts every principle of international norms regarding the eco-system and environmental issues. Vast areas, in addition to several rivers, are dangerously contaminated although much of the problem is the legacy of the old Communist regime. Moreover, Western oil companies exploring for new sources of oil in the north of the country have been found to violate the most elementary objectives of a balanced environmental policy that so many countries now par for granted, at the expense of indigenous people who rely on farming and hunting for their livelihood.

As much as I was able to tell, there appears to be a breakdown in law and order in the country across the board; taxes are not being collected, crime, especially organised crime, is on the increase — all in the name of a market economy on which much hope is being pinned for propelling the country into the club of industrialised nations.

The big question that was put to the Russian delegation was whether the Russian people were ever consulted on the dramatic structural reforms that were introduced in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet order. The answer was repeatedly answered in the affirmative, and the plebiscite of 1993, that the people approved by a majority of 53 per cent, was often cited as clear evidence of where the Russian sentiment lies.

The election of President Boris Yeltsin in 1990 and his reelection in 1997 were also referred to as valid tests of public opinion on the issue of socio-economic reforms which accompanied the political liberalisations policies that the new Russian leadership introduced.

To their credit, the Russian team members were more than candid in admitting the numerous shortcomings in their country's reform policies. Above all, there was a clear recognition of the socio-economic upheavals that ensued.

They also admitted that the middle class was nearly wiped out in the process while unemployment was cited as a price that the people have had to pay during the transition period. Above all, the delegation made clear that the covenant's provisions are justifiable in Russian courts in the sense that individuals can invoke them when they seek remedies from the state or the private sector.

In this sense, the Russians seem to go beyond what many countries are willing to do, by giving due respect to the ideals of the covenant, even though the country still has great difficulties in meeting its obligations under it.

What must have saved the day for Moscow was its declared position that it needs the counsel of the committee on how and where to rectify the existing conditions. The committee has never before seen such an open-minded posture from any government.

The Russian delegation was adamant regarding the country's course, saying that it is irreversible and there is no turning back even though the transition period is painful. The current problems are being attended to, the delegation assured us.

The main issue for the committee is the admission, by a superpower, that the terms and objectives of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are binding on it. This is a big feat for the committee which tries hard to impress upon state parties to the covenant that its provisions are binding and that maximum efforts need to be exerted to have them translated into deeds.

As a matter of fact, Russia may have gone overboard with its market economy course and needs fast adjustments, on par with those which exist in practically all the Western countries. There is no more room for the 19th century type of laissez-faire economic policies. This much Russia needs to take note of by providing for a social safety net for the unemployed, reestablishing roots for a middle class, improving working conditions where safety level has reached an all-time low level.

Environmental concerns need to be addressed as well. I think the Russian team understood well the concerns of the committee and will forward them, in due course, to their authorities.

مجلس التحرير يجرى اجتماعه لبحث المسألة الفلسطينية

Ensour denies plans...

(Continued from page 1)

qualified manpower to help the country's development and progress but the government, in the coming stage, will direct qualified and trained manpower to work in the private sector rather than seek positions within it," Dr. Ensour asserted.

At the same time, he said the government is in the process of reexamining laws and regulations with a view to granting itself

wider freedom in training officials or employees or granting them leave without pay.

The minister stressed that from now on all appointments to government offices will be very carefully studied and the candidates for the job will be selected according to efficiency.

Asked about Jordanians working abroad, Dr. Ensour said Jordanian workers enjoy a high reputation of efficiency noting that last

year Saudi Arabia alone contracted the services of 2,500 teachers to work at Saudi schools, something which caused some shortages in certain fields at Jordanian schools.

The committee also met with Abdullah Ulayyan, head of the Civil Service Commission who outlined the commission's plans for administrative development plans for creating job descriptions and the reexamination of the current system for employing government officials.

Cabinet enacts...

(Continued from page 1)

have been approved.

"What we see is at least 30 companies which will issue bonus shares and create a supply of needed shares," said Mr. Basha.

Investment analysts say more supply of stock in firms that have currently reached a maximum foreign ownership ceiling will also address a serious shortage of so-called free float in the market, seen by emerging funds as a major hindrance to investment.

Three stocks alone — Arab Bank <ARBK.AM>, Islamic Bank <IOIB.AM> and

Potash <APOT.AM>

account for 52 per cent of the market's capitalisation of JD3.5 billion (\$4.9 billion). The first two have reached a 50 per cent foreign ownership ceiling and the third has only 0.08 per cent free floating shares.

The Companies Law as also expected to improve the business climate by scrapping the state's issuing committees, which sets prices of new share issues, and waiving a 10 per cent ownership ceiling for a single founder in initial public offerings.

"They have created the momentum, right now

and they now need to maintain it," Mr. Basha said.

He said the government should act quickly on recommendations to scrap the 50 per cent foreign ownership ceiling hindering outside fund buying.

Wider foreign ownership and a set payable would accelerate foreign inflows to Jordan's bourse, whose 1997 price/earnings ratio of 10.7 compares favourably with Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon, regional rivals for investment.

Crown Prince calls for linking vocational...

(Continued from page 1)

and Minister of Education and Higher Education Muntaser Murtaji and Minister of Social Development Mohammad Manser.

After the meeting, Prince Hassan visited the Um Enjasha school at Ain Al Basha where he met with students and had lunch to pointing out that solid education starts at early stages through modern educational systems.

Earlier, Prince Hassan met the presidents of private universities and gave appreciation to the achievements of the private education sector in Jordan, but stressed the need for continued development to face challenges created by new economic and scientific developments.

These developments and major changes have imposed on us major challenges requiring from us drastic changes in the higher educational process so that it can yield competent and qualified manpower capable of handling challenges," Prince Hassan said at the meeting.

He also said that every private or state university is obligated to offer its students the best it has. And on that basis, His Royal Highness

Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani.

He said higher education should serve as a starting point towards achieving social, economic and human resource development rather than increasing socio-economic problems through flooding the labour market with thousands of unemployed or unskilled graduates.

The Crown Prince pointed out the importance of qualitative moderation of graduates from private universities... asserting the importance of quantitative modernisation of education because it is integral to the removal of obstacles, the development of economic relations between developing countries and the globalisation process.

His Royal Highness asserted the importance of providing legal criteria to regulate all universities... and stressed that self commitment and moral awareness have more basis than actual rules and regulations.

He also said that every private or state university is obligated to offer its students the best it has. And on that basis, His Royal Highness

said that there should be standards and regulations to obligate establishments to the promises they make towards their students.

Therefore, the Crown Prince pointed out the importance of cooperation between state and private run universities within a unified framework to further the national path of development.

From this, His Royal Highness emphasised the importance of standards and regulations for accrediting universities... saying that parliament was currently drafting the formation of an independent entity to assume this responsibility.

He said each university, private or state-owned, should live up to its credibility in dealing with its students by providing them with the best training, and for this to be achieved, there should be certain standards.

Prince Hassan called for closer cooperation between private and state-owned higher educational institutions with regard to curricula. He said "profitability should not be at the expense of academic standards and

universities should give due attention to scientific research and training."

His Royal Highness also urged private universities to build bridges of cooperation with productive industries that will verify their services in the future if they are competent enough. He stressed that Jordanian and Arab societies need more qualified and talented people instead of a torrent of university certificate holders.

He stressed the need for "legal criteria" to be binding for all universities and emphasised the need for these universities to commit themselves to applying these criteria. The Regent said that there should be representation of private universities within the Council of Higher Education.

During the meeting, presidents of private universities pledged themselves to offering qualitative education so as to provide the labour market with elements that will further national development.

They also emphasised the importance of viewing private universities on equal terms to state universities, especially in relation to the way they are accredited; the incorporation of private universities within the forma-

tion of educational strategies and programmes.

During his visit to Ain Al Basha Vocational Training Centre, Prince Hassan underlined the importance of vocational training, pointing out the role which the Vocational Training Corporation should play in training and rehabilitating workers for Jordanian industries.

He said graduates of vocational centres should be able to cater to the needs of the labour market and so contribute to the country's overall development.

Prince Hassan called for transforming Jordan into an industrial centre for the Arab world benefiting from the country's qualified and efficient workers, and their capabilities. Prince Hassan also stressed that the individual constitutes the main target of the reform process, which should make him feel appreciated, adding that administrative reform is linked with the concept of enhancing the sense of belonging.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour, Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki and other ministers and officials.

Iran quake...

(Continued from page 1)

news agency IRNA as saying four C-130 Hercules aircraft loaded with 80 tonnes of basic goods and other aid were ready to fly to the quake zone and four helicopters also had been allocated to help.

The radio earlier said 140 rescue teams had been sent by helicopters to the devastated area outside the towns of Qaen and Birjand to look for survivors.

Another 350 teams were on their way from other parts of Iran and army units were joining in to transport blankets, tents and food to the quake-stricken area, an agricultural region known for its saffron production.

Tehran Radio reported varied numbers of people injured in the quake. On Saturday it put the number at 40,000 while on Sunday it put it at 10,000.

Qaen's governor said his region was in need of doctors, blood, tents, food, ambulances, heavy earth-moving equipment and devices used in treating survivors, the radio said.

Iran's Interior Ministry appealed for international humanitarian aid, saying Iran's relief agencies were ready to receive assistance from those countries that would like to assist the earthquake victims.

Some 79 aftershocks shook Qaen and Birjand in the hours after the quake hit the area, shortly after midday, also cutting off rural power and water supplies, the radio said.

The quake also jolted Mashhad, Iran's second largest city with a population of about two million, 370 kilometres northwest of the earthquake's epicentre.

Thousands of people in the rural region were made homeless by the quake, which was felt across four provinces and a city 800 kilometres away.

The stricken area is less densely populated than a region near the Caspian Sea where 35,000 people were killed by Iran's worst recorded quake, which measured 7.3, in 1990.

Shares climb 0.71 per cent

(Continued from page 1)

cel a 15 per cent tax on companies raising capital by transferring capital from reserves.

The Housing Bank <THBK.AM>, which has announced plans to double its capital to 50 million dinars, was Sunday's busiest share, rising 0.01 dinars to 4.75 dinars in trade worth 360,000 dinars. But some brokers said the long delay in approving the economic reforms had taken some of the sparkle out of them.

Arab Bank <ARBK.AM>, which had promised to issue bonus shares once the reforms were passed, rose just 0.50 dinars to 256 dinars.

"Arab Bank should have been affected more," said Nasser Al-Amad, head of United Financial Investment. "Two or three months ago people were very eager for these laws to be passed, but in time they got less and less interested."

He said the shares may get an extra fillip on May 17 when the laws are due to be published in Jordan's Official Gazette, signalling they have come into effect.

The private Pearl Index of the 45 best-performing shares in terms of turnover and financial performance rose 0.46 per cent to 79.45 points, still 4.72 per cent down from the start of the year.

Pope celebrates mass in Beirut

(Continued from page 1)

civil war. Sunday's service in a naval base close to Martyrs' Square is the highlight of the gruelling visit, the first papal trip to the Middle East since 1964 and the fulfilment of a long-held dream for the Pope.

He celebrated the mass with a silver chalice recovered from a cathedral destroyed during the war and wearing embroidered robes of golden satin made by Carmelite nuns.

During the mass he is due to announce the results of a

1995 Vatican synod on Lebanon which urged the restoration of its sovereignty and the departure of foreign forces — issues at the top of the political agenda here.

On Saturday, the pontiff signed the apostolic exhortation of the synod, but full details were not disclosed.

After the mass the Pope was flown to the Maronite patriarchate in a village in a Christian heartland north of Beirut to meet Catholic clergymen before heading to Beirut airport for his return flight to Rome.

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Arabs create two new funds to finance reforms

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states announced Sunday the creation of two new funds with a combined paid-up capital of \$900 million to finance private enterprises and economic reforms in the region.

The Kuwaiti-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), one of the biggest development institutions in the region, will finance the first fund's capital of \$500 million.

The \$400 million for the second facility will come from the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), a regional IMF-style institution.

The finance ministers and the central bank governors of the 22-member Arab League announced the two projects at the end of their annual talks in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where they discussed economic performance in their countries and the 1996 activities of their main development organizations.

The \$900 million fund, to be based at AFESD, will concentrate on financing private sector projects while the AMF unit will fund reforms.

"Such programmes complement the existing development funds in the Arab World and constitute a strong boost to economic activity," the UAE minister of state for financial and industrial affairs, Mohammad Kharbush, told reporters at the end of the

ministers' conference. AFESD is already the biggest regional financier of development projects in member states, providing more than \$5 billion in loans.

The AMF, which has extended more than \$2.3 billion, has been engaged in efforts to encourage reform in the Arab World to tackle economic problems, including budget deficits, inflation, unemployment and debt.

The AMF is also the main subscriber to a \$500 million fund set up by the Arab League eight years ago to finance flagging inter-Arab trade.

AMF and AFESD officials said they had been asked by the Arab finance ministers to start working on those two projects to launch them this year.

Another fund with a capital of \$50 million was also announced by the Khartoum-based Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, one of the five key institutions that participated in the UAE conference.

Its operations will cover financing trade between Arab countries and African countries.

The annual conference opened here Saturday with a call to Arab countries to implement major structural economic reforms to increase the efficiency of their economies.

"The level of growth of Arab countries is modest compared to other countries

on the development path. They must make more efforts to improve their economies," said Bahraini Finance Minister Ibrahim Abdul Karim, opening the meeting.

"We have to implement reforms so our economies can become more competitive. We have to develop Arab financial markets so they can mobilise funds and channel them towards productive sectors and we have to allow the free flow of capital between the capitals of Arab countries," he added.

The theme of reform was echoed by the finance and industry minister of the UAE, Sheikh Hamdan Ben Rashid Al Maktum, who said Arab countries were already implementing some measures to put their economies in order, but that "liberalisation needed to be speeded up."

According to a report by the Saudi National Commercial Bank (NCB), the budget deficit of Arab countries in 1995 was \$21.4 billion.

Most Arab countries have started the process of reforming their economies in recent years by initiating privatisation and liberalisation programmes.

According to official figures, five Arab financial institutions handed out \$1.23 billion of loans to Arab League members in 1996.

U.S. regains rank among leading aid donors

PARIS (R) — The United States recovered its rank among the leading donors of non-military aid last year after climbing back from fourth place in 1995, a top U.S. aid official has said.

"The United States and Japan will be No. 1 and 2, and we don't know in what order," Brian Atwood, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, said at a briefing.

He was encouraged by renewed recognition among U.S. policymakers of the importance of aid as the United States marks the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan which helped rebuild war-torn Europe.

New U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright "considers sustainable development to be a real part of her foreign policy," Mr. Atwood said.

U.S. aid approached Japanese levels last year after a fall in the yen cut the value of Japanese aid from \$14.5 billion in 1995 to \$9.4 or \$9.5 billion last year, he said.

U.S. overseas development assistance, which does not include food aid, peace corps funding or aid to newly independent states, was about \$9.1 billion last year, "maybe more," he said.

The United States fell to fourth place in 1995 after Japan, Germany and France as a delay in budget appropriations slashed the dwindling U.S. aid budget to \$7.3 billion. It had been cut by 40 per cent in the preceding decade.

In terms of aid as a percentage of total wealth, the United States came last among the 21 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

U.S. aid as a percentage of gross national product was 0.1 per cent in 1995, compared with 0.28 per cent for Japan and 0.97 per cent for top-ranked Denmark, according to DAC figures.

Pakistan announces reforms to develop capital market

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan has unveiled reforms to develop a capital market, waiving tax on foreign investment in government securities and corporate fixed income instruments.

The measures, announced by Finance Minister Sartaj

Aziz, included a three-year extension of the capital gains tax exemption which was due to expire in June 1998, and removing the tax on bonus shares and the turnover tax on shares.

Mr. Aziz said measures requiring administrative

action would be implemented in the coming days, and those needing amendments to the income tax and other laws would come into force from July.

He said tax exemption for foreign investment in government and corporate securities would create a conducive environment for foreigners investing in Pakistani rupee-denominated instruments were exposed to risk.

The package allows investment by non-bank financial institutions in listed debt securities.

It permits foreign banks operating in Pakistan to invest in corporate fixed income securities without any restriction if such securities do not provide for conversion option.

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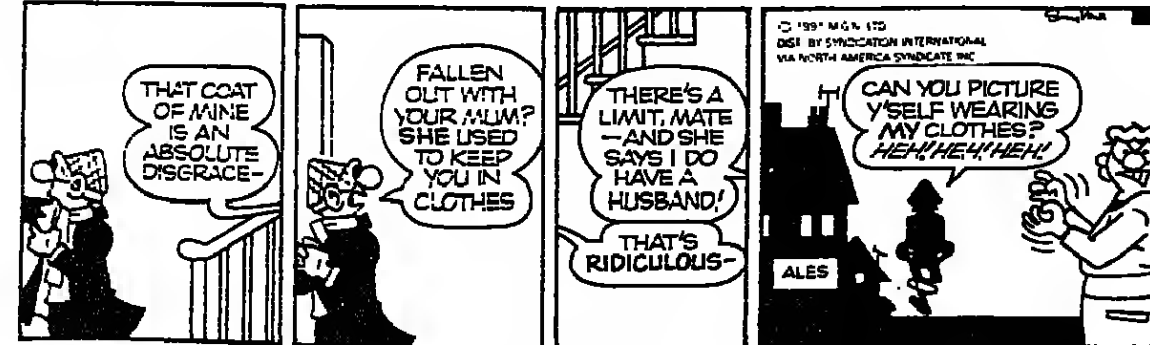
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The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6374	0.6106	1.4230	1.2000	1.3615	1.6710	1.6501	5.8805
DE Mark	0.6082	1.0000	0.3650	0.6353	0.7110	0.8243	0.9923	1.1247	3.3717
GB Sterling	1.6218	2.7360	1.0000	2.3070	1.8530	2.2587	2.7110	3.0783	9.2289
CH Franc	0.7027	1.1859	0.4327	0.7429	0.8772	1.1738	1.3335	1.3941	3.9941
JP Yen	0.0068	0.0108	0.0033	1.0000	0.0074	0.0087	0.0098	0.0101	0.0374
CA Dollar	0.7198	1.2336	0.4481	1.0442	1.10	1.2202	1.3884	1.4819	4.4819
IT Lira	0.0008	0.0013	0.0005	0.0008	0.0009	0.0010	0.0011	0.0011	0.0037
NL Guilder	0.0026	0.0042	0.0016	0.0026	0.0027	0.0030	0.0033	0.0034	0.0122
FR Franc	0.1757	0.2965	0.1083	0.2502	0.2107	0.2445	0.2835	0.3150	0.8805

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6374	0.6106	1.4230	1.2000	1.3615	1.6710	1.6501	5.8805
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	2.3270	0.8324	1.9144	1.5476	1.7876	2.0372	2.2872	6.7811
GB Sterling	0.2668	0.4388	0.1005	0.97	0.8007	0.98	1.1247	1.2483	3.6026
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	4.3781	1.6465	3.86	3.1031	3.54	4.0123	4.4795	13.2995
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4545	0.1033	1.0303	0.8432	1.01	1.1523	1.2699	3.7299
Kuwait Dinar	3.3031	5.4536	2.0374	4.7452	3.9122	4.44	5.0123	5.5299	16.5299
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.4523	0.1021	1.0226	0.8411	0.9824	1.1247	1.2483	3.6026
Lebanese L1000	0.65	1.0602	0.4176	1.0450	0.8600	0.9824	1.1247	1.2483	3.6026
Egyptian	0.2854	0.4702	0.1079	0.1114	0.0954	0.0894	0.1050	0.1151	0.3350

Energy

Commodity	Unit	Price
Brent	18.15	18.75
W. Texas	20.40	20.30
Bony	10.15	18.75
Dubai	18.20	18.30
UL Gas	192.00	192.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4388	0.1005	0.97	0.8007	0.98	1.1247	1.2483	3.6026
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4523	0.1021	1.0226	0.8411	0.9824	1.1247	1.2483	3.6026
KW Dinar	3.3031	5.4536	2.0374	4.7452	3.9122	4.44	5.0123	5.5299	16.5299
BH Dinar	0.2770	0.4570	0.1035	1.0350	0.8432	1.01	1.1523	1.2699	3.7299
CY Pound	1.977	3.336	1.2183	2.8133	2.3734	2.7133	3.0783	3.4026	9.9289

Metal Prices

Commodity	Unit	Price
Gold (oz)	347.8	348.3
Silver (oz)	4.86	4.88
Platinum (oz)	380	391
AL (3 Months)	1662	1665
CU (3 Months)	2385	2390
Zinc (3 Months)	1330	1334
Lead (3 Months)	622	624
NI (3 Months)	7800	7830

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	Month	Year	Rate	Rate
USD	5.56	5.58	0.51	0.50
GBP	9.06	6.25	0.50	0.51
JPY	0.53	0.50	0.55	0.54
DEM	2.88	2.94	3.00	3.06
FRF	3.23	3.39	3.48	3.49
CHF	1.50	1.55	1.71	1.68
ITL	7.15	7.10	7.03	6.50

Main Equity Indices

Index	Value	Change	High	Low	Open
New York DOW JONES	7199.53	32.91	7199.02	7094.48	7138.62
New York S&P 500	824.78	4.52	827.89	815.78	820.26
London FT-SE 100	4630.9	50.5	1.1	4648	4580.4
Tokyo Nikkei 225	19802.78	-258.03	-1.29	20145	19757.2
Paris CAC 40	2633.91	-8.4	-0.36	2650.96	2624
Frankfurt DAX	3562.41	10.43	0.29	3565.07	3551.9

Energy

Commodity	Unit	Price
Coffee (c/lb)	241	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1458	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	317	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	178	Spot
Soya (\$/lb)	24.19	Spot
Tea (\$/kg)	167	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	9	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot

JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Rate	Rate
US Dollar	0.706	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1491	1.1545
DE Mark	0.4188	0.4209
CH Franc	0.4867	0.4892
FR Franc	0.1243	0.1248
JP Yen	0.5891	0.5891
NL Guilder	0.3723	0.3742
IT Lira	0.423	0.4251

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

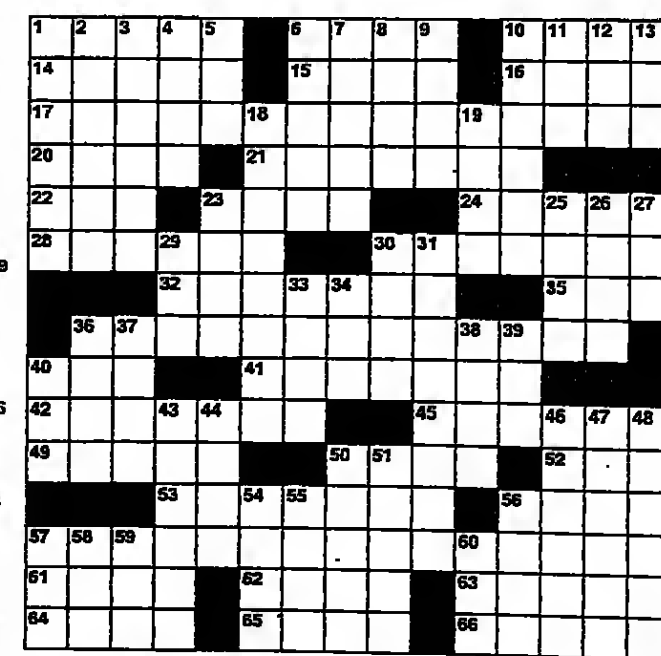
THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

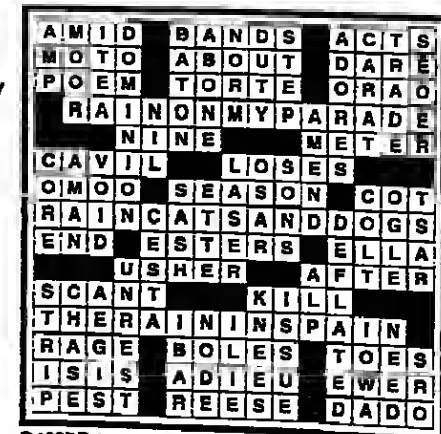
- Stupid one
- Funny Johnson
- Retiree's org., perhaps
- Pump iron
- Aretha is its queen
- Mishmash
- British film
- Behind schedule
- Goes to a restaurant
- Comp. dir.
- Post-grad. degrees
- Calendar entries
- Go off track
- Segment
- Woman of myth
- Time for scores
- French film
- Scare word
- Popeye and Ahab
- Diplomat's digs
- Yeltsin's base
- Town in Italy
- Foreleg
- Hockey name
- Make a deep impression
- Worm, to bird
- "A—" (Kubrick film)
- Skin feature
- Precipice
- Cookie jar contents
- Massages
- Requirement
- Intended

DOWN

- Fashioned
- Fold
- Dress style
- 1760 yards
- Yoko —
- Syrian president
- Wine by a mile
- Qte. Britainers:
- Big Bird's pal
- Ways to the heart
- Clay, today
- Tin Tin
- "The Bells" author
- Health
- Artifact from way back
- Prevaricator
- In — (completely)
- Gente portrayal
- Red or Black
- Mimic
- Of a time period
- Horse
- June 6, 1944
- Geisha's accessory
- Vault
- Train hopper
- Hubbard of — (completely)
- CIA precursor
- Skep-occupant
- "— Restaurant"
- Basin
- Eye part
- Northwest trail
- Most ironic



by Elizabeth C. Gorski



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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MAY 12, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) See bigwigs socially today who can appreciate your fine talents and will show you how best to make them work to your advantage. Later this evening you can get together with fellow associates and plan new plan new ways for success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Invite guests in today who are most desirable and interesting to you. Make the days ahead much brighter, by consulting with knowledgeable people and make your career activities more successful for your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take time today to ease the situation with outside allies and then you can make real progress towards becoming prosperous. Later this evening will be good for going to a romantic spot with your mate.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Study into today whatever can bring you greater abundance in the days ahead and make your efforts in business activities more prosperous. Later this evening can be good if you will relax with your loved ones at home.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a good day today to get in touch with persons you admire and gain their advice and support for the days ahead. Later tonight you can seek out knowledgeable people and make the best use of suggestions which are given.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Although you are very particular today about neatness and detail, this is a day to concentrate on his issues. Later this evening make the best of any advice of information which is provided to make your career activities prosperous.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get out socially as much as you can today and be with charming persons who can give you good advice. Deepen relations later this evening which are important to you and the success which you are seeking.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Try to understand the suggestions today of influential people and then follow them for excellent results in the days ahead. Later this evening you can be made successful if you are willing to act upon information for career activities.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can go after your wishes today with a good chance of gaining them. Avoid one who tells too many lies or you could get the wrong information which could put you in hot water with those in authority.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a good day today when your hunches can be most accurate, so be sure to rely on them as well as good judgement and you can realise your long-term goals. Later tonight make every effort to complete a new assignment.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Situations arise which will help you to use outside events very much to your advantage at this time, so make the best of any benefits. Later tonight you can get together with close friends and have a wonderful time with them.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are able today to add to present activities and you can gain more success with ease. Talk the days ahead over with allies and make the most of any suggestions which are made to you by them and thereby increase your income.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

Russians' foreign currency purchases rise to quarter of income

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russians bought nearly \$5.2 billion worth of foreign currency in January — about a quarter of their income — official figures showed, as a senior minister admitted the authorities could not halt massive outflows of private capital.

A state statistics committee report cited by Interfax news agency said Russians spent nearly 29.7 trillion rubles (\$5.2 billion) on foreign currency in January, out of total income of 121.6 trillion rubles (\$22 billion).

Many Russians traditionally keep cash savings in dollars as a hedge against inflation of the ruble, and it was not clear how much foreign currency left the country in January.

Up to \$20 billion in cash are held at home by Russians, experts say.

Private purchases of foreign currency rose in Russia from 14.3 per cent of total income in 1995 to 18.5 per cent in 1996.

Foreign investors stop flow of money into Israel shares

TEL AVIV (R) — Foreigners did not invest new money in Tel Aviv shares in March and April, following an increase of \$350 million in January and February, the Bank of Israel has said.

The central bank did not provide an explanation. But the groundbreaking of a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem in March sparked violence and sent foreign investors to the sidelines.

Total foreign investment in Tel Aviv stocks and bonds rose 21 per cent in the first quarter to about \$4.4 billion — some \$4 billion in stocks and \$346 million in bonds.

Holdings of foreign majority shareholders totalled \$2.6 billion, an increase of \$305 million. The share of foreigners in total registered capital was 9.9 per cent at the end of March.

Most of the increase was the result of a rise in share prices and only a small part was due to share purchases.

The rest of foreign investment in Tel Aviv shares grew by \$353 million in the first quarter to about \$1.4 billion. The Bank of Israel said about half the increase was from new purchases and half due to rising share prices.

Total foreign holdings in Israeli bonds rose \$115 million to \$346 million in the first quarter.

The central bank said foreigners also sold \$18.6 billion worth of Israeli stocks and bonds traded overseas.

'Electronic money' handy but carries risks

PARIS (AFP) — The development of "electronic money" can make life easier for consumers but has also brought a risk of fraud, money-laundering and infringing on private life, a report by monetary experts has said.

The report, issued by the Bank of France, was commissioned by the Group of Seven summit of the world's leading economic powers at their summit in Lyon, France, in 1996, and drawn up by experts of the larger grouping, the Group of Ten.

The report stressed the interest for consumers in such innovations as pre-paid plastic cards with memory chips or electronic transfers through the Internet.

They gave customers greater choice in methods of payment, but in return

they should be given full information about the solvency of issuers of electronic money and benefit from protection measures, the report said.

The Group of Ten experts warned of the risks of being defrauded, and of private information supplied by customers being used without authorisation by third parties who obtained it.

Criminals could use the electronic cash transfer systems either to launder money from crime or to defraud consumers, particularly by means of the Internet, the report said.

Further studies should be made on the vulnerability of electronic money in order to react quickly if needed, the report recommended. It called on the authorities to set up technical safeguards against

fraud and forgery.

Top finance officials from developed countries recently called for an international effort to upgrade financial systems in emerging markets and said the expanding use of electronic money could yield benefits.

The officials urged a "concerted international strategy to strengthen financial systems."

They said in a statement it was essential to arrive at an international consensus on "the key elements" of sound financial structures and practices in such areas as "bank supervision and securities market oversight by international groupings of national experts."

The appeal reflected a conviction in international financial circles that steps should be taken to avoid a repetition of the Mexican currency crisis that erupted two years ago and required massive outside intervention.

The officials noted the implications of the growing use of electronic money, notably as they affected consumer protec-

tion, law enforcement and supervision.

While electronic money was still in the early stages of development, the group said its use "could bring important benefits."

But it added that national authorities would have to pay attention to such issues as "transparency, financial integrity, technical security and vulnerability to criminal activity."

They nonetheless said there was currently no need "to establish new formal international coordinating mechanisms specifically addressing electronic money developments."

The group also backed moves under consideration by the International Monetary Fund to promote freer flows of capital across national borders.

"Liberalisation of capital account transactions offers substantial economic benefits and should be supported by overall economic and structural policies fostering macroeconomic equilibrium and financial sector strength," the statement said.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Machinery renting company seeks merger, struggles for profit

** IN ADDITION to contacts made with another firm in the same line of business to sound out the possibility of a merger, the Machinery Equipment Renting and Maintenance Company is obliged to reduce operational costs and general administrative expenses. Board Chairman Rashdan Al Rashdan told the general assembly. He assured the shareholders that despite the operational loss of JD41,000 last year, the company was still in possession of JD400,000 in cash which amounts to 30 per cent of the company's capital.

Mr. Al Rashdan said that due to extremely low prices/charges, the market of renting machines and equipment is very weak and that has resulted in idling most of the company's machinery. As such, the chairman added, the company's efforts to overcome the difficulties require a reconsideration of the administrative and technical staffing at the company and a restructuring as well as a reorganisation process.

Noting that the company will be continuing repairs and full maintenance to some equipment and machinery and selling what is not needed, Mr. Al Rashdan told the shareholders that he and the board of directors is fully convinced and agrees with the evaluation of the technical expert that the market value of the equipment and machinery exceeds by far the book value of these fixed assets. He also emphasised that the management of the company will continue collecting the receivables, which have accumulated for many years, and will follow up on these dues with the assistance of the legal counsellor and as far as going to court if the situation warrants. Other measures include liquidating the securities portfolio at the best possible prices.

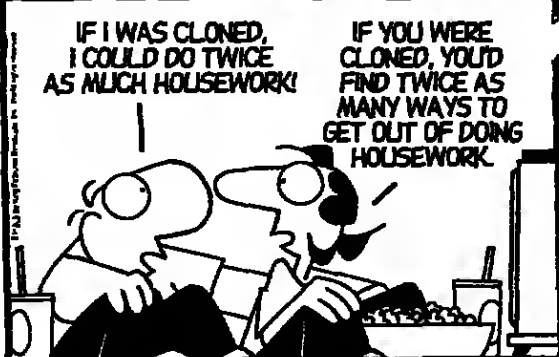
According to the annual report, the company's total assets amounted to JD942,300 of which the current portion stood at JD720,000, at the end of last year. The shareholders' equity totalled JD890,200. Regarding the profit and loss statement, the company said that its total earnings from renting machinery and equipment was only JD153,600.

Meeting at an extraordinary session after reviewing the company's 1996 performance, the general assembly overwhelmingly approved expanding the scope of the company's operations. The expansion was authorised by adding the phrase "carrying out construction work (earthmoving, digging and mining)" to the objectives of the company. Mr. Al Rashdan stressed that the company would study the projects that it can carry out on condition that their economic feasibility is fully guaranteed (Al Aswaq).

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
JORDANIAN BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 667171 / 667172											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 11/05/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANS.	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
269,000	213,000	ARAB BANK	11.8	1.56	25	1060	271055	255.50	256.00	.50+	
2,100	1,680	JOB. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	12	5975	10645	1.76	1.80	.04+	
3,600	2,760	JOB. WESTERN BK.	11.0	0.00	2	900	2704	3.90	3.04	.04+	
2,480	2,120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	6	7.83	3	350	756	2.16	2.16	-	
5,100	4,250	THE JORDANIAN BK.	14.2	4.08	16	75128	360337	4.74	4.75	.01+	
2,950	2,440	JOB. COMM. BANK	15.0	0.00	8	1522	3968	2.55	2.62	.07+	
1,050	790	JOB. GULF BANK	4.8	6.75	2	9500	7510	78	80	.01+	
4,050	3,480	JOB. ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	3.29	6	1075	3897	3.57	3.65	.08+	
2,530	1,330	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	90.4	0.00	2	580	693	1.33	1.26	.07-	
2,850	1,000	BEIT AL-KHAYMA	15.0	0.00	4	1450	1451	1.00	1.00	-	
1,440	1,000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	2	296	336	1.13	1.14	.01+	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 193.22	CHNG: +0.44	82	97806	663352				
1,820	1,450	JOB. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.0	6.06	21	11957	19724	1.65	1.65	-	
1,480	1,320	ARAB. POSTAL BK.	9	0.00	51	22950	23513	.99	1.04	.05+	
920	480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	25.2	0.00	2	250	123	.48	.49	.01+	
2,200	1,170	MID. EAST HOTELS	19.7	0.00	11	6550	8415	1.26	1.29	.03+	
1,220	960	SABER EDUCATION	9	0.00	4	1450	1426	.97	.99	.02+	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 104.70	CHNG: +0.11	89	42957	53220				
3,800	3,040	JOB. CEMENT FACT.	25.2	2.94	16	44778	168705	3.74	3.74	-	
3,500	2,710	JOB. PHOSPHATE MINE	8.7	3.17	1	200	630	3.15	3.15	-	
6,100	4,950	ARAB POTASH CO.	13.7	3.29	8	3200	38813	5.78	5.90	.12+	
10,400	6,720	JOB. FERTIL. INDUSTRY	9.1	9.51	12	2817	2651	9.33	9.35	.02+	
7,300	6,250	JORDAN TANKING	7.5	4.32	2	56	341	6.36	6.10	.26-	
3,280	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	9	0.00	17	6000	11741	1.92	1.94	.02+	
7,600	6,420	JOB. WOODEN KILLS	10.8	2.95	3	2200	14505	6.56	6.70	.14+	
3,990	3,040	ARAB PHARM. IND.	9.8	5.62	24	15725	56127	3.51	3.56	.05+	
7,250	5,650	JOB. CERAMIC IND.	7.4	2.78	3	1400	9640	7.00	7.20	.20+	
2,100	1,430	JOB. PAPER IND.	17.7	9.55	2	500	719	1.43	1.43	-	
1,760	1,130	JOB. STEEL IND.	17.3	0.00	2	14250	16603	1.13	1.13	-	
5,910	4,250	DAR ALDINA. DV. INV.	11.3	5.43	4	2400	11049	4.58	4.60	.02+	
960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.2	0.00	21	21800	12275	.51	.53	.02+	
1,110	1,020	ARAB PAPER COV. IND.	31.5	0.00	4	1050	10715	1.02	1.03	.01+	
1,520	1,010	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	2	3750	4125	1.10	1.10	-	
1,540	700	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	20	7850	5811	.73	.76	.03+	
5,750	2,130	WATG. CABLE WIRE MFG.	16.9	0.00	6	750	2055	2.67	2.77	.10+	
1,170	570	JOB. SUPPLY-CHRM	9	0.00	22	7550	5299	.68	.70	.02+	
1,670	1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	18.3	4.90	17	6350	9068	1.41	1.43	.02+	
2,660	1,410	UNIV. WOOD. IND.	17	0.00	18	5455	8285	1.49	1.51	.02+	
1,730	1,130	UNIV. WOOD. RESOURCES	15.2	8.85	11	31200	3524	1.13	1.13	-	
1,130	640	JOB. NEW CABLE CO.	16.1	0.00	14	4800	4048	.87	.88	.01+	
1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	27.5	0.00	6	3000	3481	1.15	1.17	.02+	
1,430	860	UNION CH. & TEB.	25.1	0.00	3	2400	2208	.91	.92	.01+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 116.12	CHNG: +1.15	239	163129	396981				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 152.00	CHNG: +0.71	410	303892	1113553				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 11/05/1997											
.600	.410	ARAB. BOP. MGMT. MATH.	9	0.00	2	800	392	.49	.49	-	
.670	.370	CENTRAL CHM. STORAGE	9	0.00	3	250	100	.40	.40	-	
.750	.410	JOB. TRADING PAC.	11.5	0.00	6	10100	4343	.41	.42	.01+	
.840	.660	ORION INV. SPT	9	0.00	16	64200	10919	.67	.68	.01+	
.810	.370	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	21	24000	11280	.45	.47	.02+	
.950	.730	AL-SHARQ INV. 751	2	0.00	10	21858	10495	.73	.73	-	
1.400	.510	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	2	750	120	.44	.44	-	
.690	.420	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	50.7	0.00	2	700	308	.44	.44	-	
.810	.400	WATG. WOOD. IND. MATHCO	2	0.00	12	24600	14268	.56	.56	.03+	
.640	.430	WATG. CABLE WIRE MATHCO	2	0.00	1	10000	5800	.55	.58	.03+	
1.280	.860	UNION TOBACCO 751	2	0.00	6	1350	626	.87	.86	.01-	
.620	.390	JORD. ENV.	26.5	0.00	11	14500	6189	.42	.43	.01+	
.950	.760	JORD. CERAMIC	21.6	0.00	12	3150	2503	.81	.83	.02+	
.620	.590	WATG. FOUNDRY	2	0.00	28	50000	34195	.66	.66	-	
1.000	.950	NAT. ALUMINUM 751	2	0.00	1	100	65	.95	.90	.05-	
.870	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.7	0.00	11	13850	9005	.66	.66	-	
GRAND TOTAL			147	240243	111327						

↑ = New 12 months low
 ↓ = Listed during the past 12 months
 P/E ratio is 100 or more
 Negative P/E
 * Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PIRGE

GEHEN

BLAURT

CLEMUS

Answer: TO THE (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BORAX KEYED FEWEST HOLLOW
 Answer: Why the author refused his dinner offer - SHE WAS "BOOKED"

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Kasparov, Deep Blue, look for victory in final game

NEW YORK (AFP) — World chess champion Garry Kasparov and IBM super computer Deep Blue looked to a sixth and final game to determine the winner of their rematch after man and machine played to a draw Saturday.

A visibly exasperated Kasparov agreed to a draw even though his white pieces had dominated play throughout the game, which was harder fought than the previous chess-board battles in the \$1.1-million tournament.

"I saw the draw in move forty," Kasparov, 34, said on emerging from the isolated conference room in which he and Deep Blue played their 49-move draw that evened the score at 2.5 points apiece.

"That was probably the cleanest game in the match. It was very close and it has been a miracle that the black could save the game," he added.

Kasparov, World Chess Champion since 1985, is to play the final game Sunday with the black pieces, but was undaunted by the theoretical disadvantage at which that placed him.

"I will do better moves," he said, recognising that his electronic adversary — eight years in the making — is an "outstanding scientific achievement."

Chung-Jen Tan, the head of the IBM team that created Deep Blue, agreed that "the baby is doing very well."

Deep Blue, which can calculate 200 million possible moves per second, lost the first game, won the second and drew the last three games with Kasparov.

"The computer has not won a game, I have lost one," Kasparov told a chuckling audience that has followed the match in the basement of an insurance company's headquarters here.

Each draw is worth half a point, while a win earns one point.

Should man and machine tie again Sunday, the purse will be shared between them.

Kasparov beat Deep



World chess champion Garry Kasparov studies the board early in the fifth game of the six-game, \$1.1 million chess match against IBM super computer Deep Blue in New York. The match was tied before the game with one win for each side and one draw for each side (Reuters photo)

Blue's predecessor last year in Philadelphia, but the champion has struggled against the new version, which is twice as fast.

"Sometimes computers do very human moves," he said.

IBM has denied it was using the highly publicised match to work on an artificial intelligence project.

Chess and artificial intelligence expert Frederic Friedel, a member of Kasparov's team, said Deep Blue has an intelligence of its own.

"Extremely deep searches turn into strategic behaviours," he told AFP, adding "I hope very much we can have access" to the computer's programmes.

"We would like to put Deep Blue on the Internet and make it available to the public," Chung-Jen Tan said without commenting on the possibility of granting access to the program itself.

Asked what changes had been made to the super computer since the tournament began, he said IBM

took "Deep Blue for a walk this morning."

The computer scientist then said his team had fixed a few programme "bugs" that appeared in previous games.

Friedel said that for Kasparov "the most important driving force here is curiosity."

"It is like (Formula One race car driver) Michael Schumacher faced with a 4,000-horse-power Ferrari. Of course he would like to drive it."

Juan Gonzalez leads Rangers past Red Sox

BOSTON (R) — Heathcliff Slocumb threw Juan Gonzalez a tomato, and he mashed it.

Gonzalez hit a grand slam to highlight a six-run ninth inning and drove in six runs to power the Texas Rangers to a 11-5 win over the slumping Boston Red Sox Saturday.

Gonzalez, playing in his eighth game since beginning the year on the disabled list, swung away on a 3-0 pitch to give the Rangers a 10-5 lead.

"At 3-0, a lot of hitters will take one strike in that situation looking for something close in the zone," said Gonzalez, last season's American League most valuable player.

"He threw me a fastball, a tomato, and I hit it hard. The ball just jumped out of the yard."

The Rangers had loaded the bases on a double by Mark McLemore and walks to Damon Buford and Ivan Rodriguez. An error by Slocumb on a ground ball by Rusty Greer allowed the first run to score and Gonzalez followed with his second homer of the season, doubling his RBI total for the season.

"Johnny (manager Johnny Oates) had mentioned he had never let anyone swing 3-0 with the bases loaded, but he let Juan do it and Juan came up big," said Rangers pitcher Danny Patterson (4-3).

"I was unable to throw strikes consistently and I

got behind in the count," said Slocumb (0-2).

The Rangers added another run in the inning when Will Clark doubled and scored on a single by McLemore. Clark has hit safely in 11 career games at Fenway Park and is 25-for-49 (.510) in that span.

The Red Sox have lost seven of their last eight games.

In Chicago, Dave Martinez had the game-winning hit in the White Sox' final at-bat for the second consecutive night as they won three straight games for the first time this season, defeating the Oakland Athletics 9-8.

Martinez, who drove in the winning run in Friday's 10-inning victory, scored Frank Thomas from third with a single in the bottom of the ninth.

Thomas continued his torrid hitting with a three-run homer in two at-bats for Chicago. He has 21 hits in his last 42 at-bats and has raised his average to .351.

Jose Canseco had a two-run homer and a two-run single for Oakland, which has dropped four straight.

At Minnesota, Roger Clemens tied a club record with 14 strikeouts and remained unbeaten and Benito Santiago hit a pair of two-run homers as the Toronto Blue Jays held on for their seventh win in eight games, 6-4 over the Twins.

Clemens (6-0) has won his first six decisions for the

third time in his career. He also started 6-0 in 1991 and 14-0 in 1987, winning the CY young award each of those seasons.

Clemens allowed four runs and eight hits over seven innings. He tied a Blue Jays single-game record for strikeouts established by Pat Hentgen against Kansas City on May 3, 1994. It was his 70th game with 10 or more strikeouts, tying Rube Waddell and Tom Seaver for fifth on the all-time list.

In New York, Ramiro Mendoza gave up two runs in eight innings and Bernie Williams and Paul O'Neill each homered and drove in two runs to lead the Yankees, without ejected manager Joe Torre, to a 5-2 victory over the Kansas City Royals.

Mendoza (2-1) gave up eight hits and walked one with four strikeouts. He lowered his era from 7.08 to 5.72 in his longest career outing.

Torre was ejected before the start of the game for arguing about a second protest in Friday night's 12-inning loss to the Royals.

The game was played under protest over a rundown play in the sixth inning. Torre lodged another protest over a non-called balk that would have ended the game.

In Baltimore, pinch-hitter Mike Blowers' two-out, RBI single in the 11th off reliever Randy Myers (0-2) lifted the Seattle Mariners to a 3-2 victory over the

Orioles. Norm Charlton (2-1) pitched three scoreless innings to earn the win.

Joey Cora, who went 5-for-5 with a home run in Seattle's 8-2 win on Friday, led off the game with a homer off Scott Kamieniecki. Cora also doubled in the third inning for his eighth consecutive hit, tying a club record. The streak ended when Cora bounced back to the pitcher in the fifth.

In Detroit, Omar Olivares pitched a three-hitter for his first Major-League shutout as the Tigers blanked the Cleveland Indians 6-0.

Olivares (2-2) struck out a season-high seven batters and did not allow a Cleveland runner to reach third base. It matched the low-hit game of his career.

Bob Higginson homered and drove in two runs and Tony Clark added a three-run homer for Detroit, which won for only the second time in its last six games.

In Milwaukee, reliever Rich Delucia issued three straight walks in the 10th inning, including one with the bases loaded to Jose Valentin, as the Brewers beat the Anaheim Angels 4-3 to improve to 8-1 in one-run games.

The win was the third in a row for the Brewers while the Angels suffered their fourth straight loss.

Neagle, Jones become six-game winners

PITTSBURGH (R) — The Atlanta Braves' Denny Neagle and the New York Mets' Bobby Jones became the National League's first six-game winners on Saturday.

In Pittsburgh, Neagle scattered six hits and three runs — two earned — over six innings and Jeff Blauser's third career grand slam highlighted a five-run third inning as the Braves routed the Pirates 9-3.

Neagle (6-0), an ex-Pirate who was facing his former team for the first time, struck out a season-high nine. His current six-game winning streak is also the longest of his career.

"It was strange pitching here," Neagle said. "I had butterflies, but I thought if I got through the first inning I would settle down. My teammates made it easy for me tonight."

Javier Lopez, Ryan Klesko and chipper Jones all homered for the Braves, who had scored only five runs in four previous games against the Pirates. The Braves also broke out of a streak in which they had scored three runs or less in their previous eight games.

Pittsburgh had its season-high four-game winning streak snapped.

In St. Louis, Bobby Jones gave up two hits over eight innings and John Olerud hit a solo homer as the Mets moved to the .500 mark for the first time in more than a year with a 2-0 blanking of the Cardinals.

Jones (6-2) posted his third straight victory and has allowed only three runs in 22 innings during that stretch.

Jones gave up only a lead-off double to Royce Clayton

in the bottom of the third inning and a leadoff single to Mike Delfino in the fifth, retiring 11 of the last 12 batters he faced before giving way to John Franco.

"I'm feeling a lot more comfortable with my breaking pitch. (Catcher Todd) Hundley called a very good game," Jones said. "This was one of those games that just happened. Our defence was outstanding."

In San Francisco, Kirk Rueter allowed four hits over eight shutout innings as the giants overcame the season's first triple play and held on for a 4-2 victory over the Chicago Cubs, snapping a three-game losing streak.

Rueter (2-0) extended his scoreless streak to 20 1/3 innings and lowered his era to 1.81. He walked none and recorded a career-high eight strikeouts, leaving after throwing 137 pitches. The Giants have won six of his seven starts.

The triple play occurred when San Francisco bad runners at first and second with none out in the fifth. Stan Javier lofted a flyball

to shallow centre. Second-base umpire Bob Davidson invoked the infield fly rule late and the ball glanced off centre fielder Brian McRae's glove.

McRae recovered to throw Rueter out at third and third baseman Jose Hernandez fired to second to catch Darryl Hamilton.

"That's the first one I'd seen in person," manager Dusty Baker said. "That's one of the strangest plays I've seen ever."

At Florida, Chris Holt won his second straight start and Ricky Gutierrez snapped a fifth-inning tie with a two-run pinch single as the Houston Astros ended an 11-game losing streak at the Marlins' pro player stadium, 4-2.

The Astros moved a half game ahead of Pittsburgh into first place in the National League Central Division.

In Philadelphia, Darren Daulton hit a two-run

homer with two out in the 10th inning to lift the Phillies to a 3-4 victory over the Colorado Rockies.

Daulton lined a 1-1 pitch over the right-field fence for his third home run, extending Colorado's season-high losing streak to four games. Daulton had three hits and Rico Brogna extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a two-run homer.

In Los Angeles, pinch-hitter Eddie Williams' two-out single in the bottom of the ninth scored Todd Zeile with the winning run as the Dodgers won for the fifth time in six games, edging the Montreal Expos 2-1.

In San Diego, Ken Caminiti's run-scoring single snapped a tie and sparked a six-run third inning as the Padres defeated the Cincinnati Reds 9-6.

Sterling Hitchcock (3-3) gave up five runs and seven hits in 6 1/3 innings as San Diego won for just the fourth time in 17 games.

Stoltenberg reaches final against Bjorkman

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida (R) — Fourth seed Jason Stoltenberg of Australia earned a chance to defend his title at the America's red clay tennis championship against top seed Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden with a victory Saturday.

The 32nd-ranked Stoltenberg defeated 75th-ranked Belgian Johan Van Herck 6-3 6-3 in a semifinal match.

Living up to his first-time billing as a number one seed, the 23rd-ranked Bjorkman ended 193rd-ranked qualifier Steve Campbell's surprising run here to reach the finals with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 semifinal victory.

"I've never had a chance to defend a title before, so I think this is really great," Stoltenberg said. "It's just great to be in the final and be able to try and be a back-to-back champion at a tournament."

Bjorkman, who was making his fifth semifinal appearance of the year, will try to win his second career title. His first came at Auckland, New Zealand, in January.

The Swede currently possesses the best win-loss record on the ATP Tour this year, entering Sunday's final at 30-10. Bjorkman had not lost a set in three matches before reach-

ing the semis. Bjorkman won 84 per cent of the points when he got his first serve in, but had some difficulty with Campbell, a player he beat handily the only other time they met, at the 1995 Japan Open.

"I was hitting the ball very badly today," Bjorkman said. "I didn't have any confidence. I was a little scared of hitting the ball. I was rushing to make winners instead of letting him play and make mistakes."

Bjorkman broke Campbell's serve on all three opportunities the American offered — in the seventh game of the first set when Campbell double faulted at 30-40, at 0-40 in the seventh game of the second set and at 30-40 in the third game of the third set.

Stoltenberg has been red-hot the past few weeks. He was a finalist last week in Atlanta and a semifinalist two weeks ago in Orlando.

"I'm very happy with the way I played tonight," Stoltenberg said. "It's definitely the best match I've played in the past few weeks."

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J 3

SOUTH
A 10 8 8 7 2
Q 7
J 6 3
A Q 4

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1c 2c Pass Pass
4c

Opening lead: King of ♠

There are many card combinations which are familiar to competent declarers. However, each must be taken in context of the hand as a whole. What is right as a general rule is not necessarily correct in a particular situation.

North's jump to four hearts showed a singleton in that suit and the values for at least a raise to four spades. South had no ambi-

tions beyond game and East wisely refrained from sacrificing in five hearts.

West led the king of hearts and shifted to a diamond, threatening to establish a trick there for the defenders. Declarer won in dummy and, if the trump losers could be held to one, the contract was safe even if the defenders scored a diamond trick.

The percentage play to accomplish that would be to take two trump finesses, which limits the losers to one if East holds at least one honor. But the auction and early play led South to believe that West held both honors, and if declarer has to lose two trump tricks, the contract could be made only by avoiding a diamond loser.

There was a way, and declarer found it.

At trick two, declarer led a spade to the ace, then abandoned trumps in favor of starting to run the clubs. West ruffed the third round and reverted to diamonds, but declarer was in control. The second diamond was again won on the table, and the king of clubs was led. South discarding the last diamond from the closed hand. The high trump was the third and last trick for the defense.

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Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine celebrates after his victory over Spain's Felix Mantilla in the final of the Hamburg tournament. Medvedev won the match 6-0, 6-4, 6-2 (Reuters photo)

Martinez faces Pierce in Italian Open final

ROME (AFP) — Spain's Conchita Martinez will defend her Italian Open title against France's Mary Pierce on Sunday, after the two favourites came through their semi-finals here.

Martinez, on course for a fifth consecutive title here, cruised to a comfortable 6-2, 6-2 victory over Swiss teenager Patty Schnyder.

Pierce, whose legs were feeling the effects of a tough week at the Foro Italico, had to come from a set down to beat Austrian Barbara Paulus 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 in the first centre court match.

Though Pierce has captured the hearts of the Italian crowd, the favourite will be Martinez, who avenged Schoyder's victory over fellow Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario the previous night.

Martinez suffered an unexpected service break in the opening game of her match, but went on to break three times as the world number six from Barcelona dominated the opening set.

The second set was a repeat of the first, with Schnyder managing a surprise break in the opening game — before Martinez broke three times to bring up an easy victory.

"I have to play with a lot of patience and wait for an opportunity to

win points," Martinez said of her solid baseline game.

"I've won here four times and I don't see any reason to change it."

Schnyder, who along with Sanchez Vicario also claimed the scalp of sixth seeded south African Amanda Coetzer, said: "This wasn't a good match, but if I look over the whole week this was a good week for me."

"There were close games and close points, but I lost them all," she concluded, "and that's why the result was so clear."

In the other semi-final, Pierce played a useful first set that was littered with mistakes, allowing 11th seeded Paulus to win it simply by keeping the ball in play.

But Pierce soon rediscovered the touch which had defeated top seed Monica Seles earlier in the week, breaking twice in the second set and three times in the third to line up her third final of the year.

"I started off really slow today, I felt tired and I didn't really feel into the match," Pierce said. "Barbara plays very well on clay, she doesn't make any mistakes and to beat her I had to play really solid."

"I wasn't moving so well and I needed to step up, take the ball on the rise and move forward. But my legs were

Sampras draws Courier in Italian Open

ROME (AFP) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras could be in for a shock first round exit here this week, after drawing former winner Jim Courier in the Italian Open on Sunday.

While the other major seeds should breeze into the second round of the \$2.3 million tournament, Sampras faces a fellow American who won this tournament in 1992 and 1993.

Sampras has also won here, in 1994, and has three titles under his belt already this year.

But after losing his first match of the clay court season at Monte Carlo last month, the top seed cannot have drawn a more unwelcome opponent here.

Michael Chang, with four victories this season including a clay title at Orlando, is seeded second at the Foro Italico and starts with Argentine Hernan Gumy.

Thomas Muster, the defending champion who is aiming to become the first man to win the Italian open four times, is seeded third and has the easiest debut, against Italian wild card entrant Marzio Martelli.

Russian fourth seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov faces Spaniard Javier Sanchez, while last year's losing finalist here, Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek, is fifth and also starts with an Italian wild card, Diego Nargiso.

Boris Becker (x12) and British hope Tim Henman (x14) meet wild card Andrea Gaudenzi and Spaniard Roberto Carretero respectively.

Another win for Princess Haya's Team Harmony

CONTINUING A SUPER RUN of success HRH Princess Haya's Team Harmony mare Scandal won her second Derby event in a row when competing at the Mannheim show in Germany last Monday.

She had taken a similar contest at Jerez in Spain the previous week bringing the Australian bred mare's total of wins for the season so far to six.

Ridden by Paul Darragh, she was fourth of 30 to go over the 18 fence Derby track at the German arena which will host the 1997 European Championships in September.

At the same show, Team Harmony's grey mare, Cera, had a double clear in the main jump-off event to fill third place behind Alois Folimann-Schweckhorst and Ulrich Kirchhoff.

Cera's next outing with Paul Darragh will be at Royal Windsor where he joins with Eddie Machen, Trevor Coyle, Tom Slattery and Peter Charles for the Samsung Nations Cup meeting.

Harmony is bidding to win the Prince of Wales Cup for the first time in 60 years.

a little heavy.

"It took me a little while to get going but after the first set, I started feeling better. And as the match went on, I was feeling better and better."

Pierce made it clear she had no fear of her final opponent.

"I don't worry about anybody I play against, I go out there to have fun and play tennis," said the 22-year-old from Montreal. "I just give it everything I have and fight for every point until the end."

Paulus, not surprisingly, had a few suggestions about the afternoon's play.

"I was happy to be in the semi-finals," she said. "But maybe I made too many unforced errors today."

"In the first set I had a little bit more rhythm and I think

Mary was a little bit nervous. Then she played better, and harder, and I lost my game somehow. My concentration wasn't there in the third set."

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Malone atones as Jazz win; Bulls make up for loss to Hawks

INGLEWOOD (R) — Redemption was the word for the day in the NBA playoffs Saturday as Karl Malone and the Utah Jazz atoned for an atrocious showing the last time out and the Chicago Bulls made up for a shocking loss to the Atlanta Hawks.

Malone scored 42 points and set a playoff free-throw record as the Jazz moved within one win of a return trip to the Western Conference finals with a convincing 110-95 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers.

In Atlanta, Toni Kukoc scored eight of his 16 points in a fourth-quarter run as the defending champion Bulls regained the homecourt advantage with a 100-80 road rout of the Hawks in game 3 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

Malone was 18-of-18 from the line, breaking the mark for most foul shots made without a miss of 17, shared by Gail Goodrich, Bob Love and Indiana Pacers guard Reggie Miller.

Utah took a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven conference semifinals. The Jazz can wrap up the series Monday with a win at home, where they are 42-3 this season.

"This game is over now," said Malone, who shot just 2-of-20 from the field in scoring 15 points in game 3. "The most important game is Monday night and our most important thing is not to let down, because they're coming in ready to play."

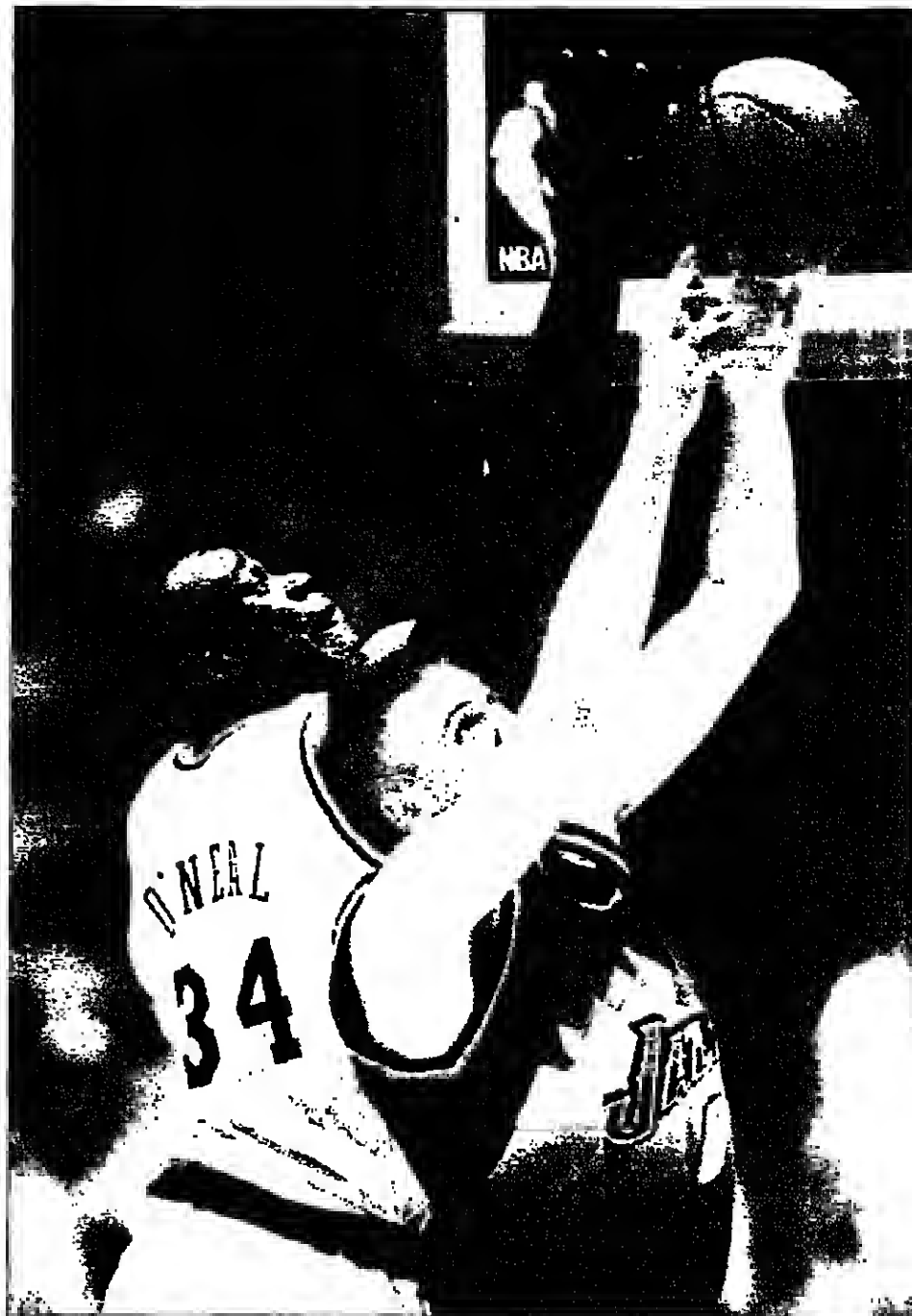
"I think we were embarrassed with the way we played Thursday and with the way we shot," said Jazz coach Jerry Sloan, whose team lost by 20 points in the previous game.

Bryon Russell added a playoff career-high 29 points for Utah.

"That had to be the best game I ever played," said Russell, who shot 12-of-20 from the field.

Shaquille O'Neal had 34 points, 11 rebounds and six blocks for the Lakers, who trailed by as many as 18 points and lost for the first time in four home playoff games.

"The obvious factor in the game was that they came out with more energy and aggressiveness like we did in game 3," Lakers coach



The Utah Jazz center Greg Ostertag (R) beats the Los Angeles Lakers Shaquille O'Neal to the rebound in the first period of Game 4 of their NBA semifinal game in Inglewood, CA. The Jazz won 110-95, to take a 3-1 series lead (Reuters photo)

Del Harris said. "Across the board, we did not play with the kind of intensity we needed for what could have been the biggest game of the year."

The defending champion Bulls bounced back from their home loss Thursday with their best performance of the playoffs. After erasing an early 10-point deficit, they held the Hawks to 28 points in the second half and took a 2-1 series lead. Game 4 is Sunday in Atlanta.

Michael Jordan scored 21 points and Scottie Pippen added 17 for Chicago, but neither was a major factor

in the decisive 19-4 burst. Jordan and Pippen had carried the offensive load in the Bulls' first five playoff games, combining for over 55 points per contest.

"It was a game that we've been waiting for in the sense that we busted out of a little slump to some degree," Jordan said.

"The first thing you want to do when you lose on your homecourt is to get it back," Pippen said. "We want to put them back on their heels but not let them do it to us. Our defence did not allow them to get open looks. We hustled, we beat them to the loose balls."

League rebound leader Dennis Rodman again was a non-factor. He came off the bench and received two personal fouls in his first two minutes. He also was whistled for his eighth technical foul of the playoffs.

"They said I was trying to intentionally hurt a player," Rodman said.

"If you really want to single me out, at least give me a memo before the game and don't do it in front of millions of people."

Late-season addition Brian Williams scored 10 of his 14 points in the fourth quarter as the Bulls pulled away.

Announcement

Anita S. Bwtoso was reported missing and has not yet returned home. Those who have any information about her shall call at the nearest police station and those who conceal any information will be charged before law.

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A ROYAL STANCE OF CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT: Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor stand by Her Royal Highness Princess Aysha Bent Al Hussein whose remarkable efforts to improve the welfare of female soldiers in the Arab Army has been noted internationally (photo shot on Sunday by Yousef 'Allan')

Turkish army dismisses more 'Algeria' warnings

ANKARA (AFP) — A senior Turkish army official on Saturday dismissed as inconsequential warnings from an Islamist deputy that Turkey was in danger of becoming a second Algeria — mired in bloody struggle.

"The armed forces do not respond to the ramblings of an out-of-date person," General Erol Ozkanak, secretary general of the army chief-of-staff, told Anatolia news agency.

He was speaking a day after Halil Ibrahim Celik, a member of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's pro-Islamist Welfare Party, created a furore by arguing that army-backed plans to close religious secondary schools would lead to bloodshed.

"In this case Turkey will turn into a second Algeria or the situation will be worse than in Algeria," Mr. Celik warned.

According to Western estimates, more than 60,000 people have been killed in the north African state since the cancellation of a second round of elections in January

1992 which the now outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

Gen. Ozkanak accused the deputy of making "provocative and subversive statements."

"We (the army) are convinced that the democratic organisation will make an adequate response and that the judicial organs will fulfil their duty with regard to aggressions against the army and the fundamental principle of the Turkish republic," he continued.

Turkey's press reported Saturday that Ankara prosecutors had opened an inquiry into the deputy's remarks in connection with "explicitly inciting hatred and hostility among the people."

Under the Turkish penal code, the offence carries a maximum sentence of three years in jail.

If the prosecutor decides that Mr. Celik has broken the law, he must ask the Turkish parliament to suspend parliamentary immunity before he can proceed.

Justice Minister Sevkettin Kizilirmaci refused to comment on the affair.

Under the education bill demanded by the pro-secular military and drafted by Welfare Party's conservative coalition partner, the True Path Party of Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, state-run Islamist secondary schools should be closed as part of measures to curb rising pro-Islamisation.

These schools produce the imams or religious leaders, from which the Welfare Party relies for its future leaders.

The latest row has worsened already heightened tensions in Turkey over the role of Islam in society.

In an apparent effort to defuse the situation, Mr. Celik released a statement in which he asserted "his comments were not a declaration," but he stopped short of a denial.

Meanwhile, one of the Welfare Party's vice presidents Riza Uluak, dismissed the comments as a "joke."

Turkish minister leaves Baghdad after signing gas deal

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Turkish Energy Minister Raci Kutan left Baghdad on Sunday after signing a preliminary agreement for the construction of a \$2.5-billion pipeline to supply Turkey with Iraqi gas.

Speaking to the official news agency INA, Mr. Kutan expressed "satisfaction" at the results of his four-day visit to Iraq.

"These results will have a big effect on strengthening relations between the two countries," he said.

The 1,300-kilometre pipeline is to have a capacity of 10 billion cubic meters, and would lead from Iraq to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

Neither Turkey nor Iraq has given any indication of when construction of the project might start, and whether it is conditional on the lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The official Iraqi press on Sunday carried banner front page headlines trumpeting the signing ceremony for the deal in Baghdad on Saturday involving Mr. Kutan and Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rashid.

Turkey opened a double oil pipeline to Iraq in December in line with the U.N. Security Council's oil-for-food resolution, which partially lifted the international embargo against Iraq.

Under Resolution 986, part of the crude oil that Iraq exports flows through the pipeline to Turkey, which had been closed since the U.N. clamped the embargo on Iraq in 1990.

The pipeline links the Kirkuk oil fields of northern Iraq with the Turkish oil terminal of Yumurtalik.

In December, Turkey concluded an agreement with Iraq to buy 3.6 million tonnes of Iraqi oil.

Before the 1991 Gulf war that drove Iraq out of Kuwait, the volume of Turkish-Iraqi trade was nearly \$2 billion a year.

Ankara claims it has lost about \$60 billion because of the U.N. sanctions.

U.S. general warns Iranian army on closing the straight

MANAMA (AFP) — A senior U.S. general on Saturday warned Iran that any attempt to take control of the strategic strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf would meet a firm U.S. response.

General J.H. Binford Peay, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Central Command, told a press conference here that although Iran had sophisticated ballistic missiles, it was unlikely to be able to carry out a recent boast that it could close the straight at will.

"I don't believe it can do that. We will take immediate action in terms of the defence of the straits," said the general.

"Access to the straits is very important not just to the United States of America but it is vitally important for the entire world."

A senior Iranian army officer made the threat late last month after more than 200,000 Iranian troops had staged massive air, sea and land exercises along the entire Iranian gulf coast.

Gen. Peay described Iran as the "middle and long-term threat to the region," and said the Islamic Republic continued to foster regional terrorism.

The general said Iraq too was still a threat, and that the U.S. would stand firm against Baghdad as long as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, "continued to make the statements he makes and directs his threats against Kuwait."

Gen. Peay also said restrictions imposed on U.S. servicemen in the region after terrorist threats were being eased. "You will see a lessening of high restrictions over the next few weeks," he said.

The U.S. embassy in Bahrain April 7, warned U.S. military personnel and civilians they faced the threat of "terrorist" attacks in Bahrain, and ordered restrictions on visits to bars and restaurants in the tiny gulf country where the U.S. navy has its Gulf base.

Around 12,000 U.S. military personnel are stationed on ships in the Gulf, and they regularly visit large cities in the area.

Gen. Peay was speaking at the end of a two-day visit to Manama during which he held talks with Bahraini officials on military cooperation.

The general has already visited Saudi Arabia, and is to make trips to Kuwait and Jordan before returning to the U.S.

Iranian earthquake turns school into a graveyard

ARDAKUL, Iran (AP) — Like any other day, Mohammad Alijan kissed his nine-year-old daughter, Mahbubeh, on both cheeks before she raced down the road to her village school.

Ten minutes later, she was crushed to death, one of 110 girls killed when a powerful earthquake Saturday turned their school into a pile of jagged slabs of concrete and steel.

Once a picture postcard town of pastures and trees, Ardadkul has become a graveyard: more than 500 of the village's 1,600 residents were killed by falling homes and buildings that left little standing in this oasis on the barren Shad Kuh Mountain.

The worst hit was the village elementary school, which had just disgorged hundreds of clamorous boys after the morning shift.

Soon, the two-storey building was packed with girls aged 5 to 12 for the afternoon shift. In keeping with Islamic tradition, boys and girls study separately in Iranian schools.

In the neighbouring village of Zohar, near the earthquake's epicentre, tragedy again struck the young. At least 60 pupils were killed while offering their midday prayers at the school.

Most of the survivors among the 400 families in Ardadkul were men who were out in the fields or grazing cattle.

The women, the old and children had little chance of escaping the fury of the 7.1 magnitude tremor.

After a daylong effort to dig out bodies, Ardadkul was in mourning Sunday. The village was filled with tears and cries for the dead. "God, God, why are you punishing us," cried one man, as he carried a body to a newly dug grave.

Like him, dozens of men washed dead bodies in a village pond, wrapped them in shrouds and carried them on broken doors — there were no stretchers — to a hilltop where others had dug graves.

"My flower, my flower, why did you leave me," Mr. Alijan wailed as he lifted the body of his daughter, Mahbubeh, which was wrapped in a dirty brown blanket speckled with dried blood and mud. "I wished to see your marriage, now I see your dead body."

Mr. Alijan and his two young sons — who went to the same school but emerged just minutes before the quake — dug through the rubble for 10 hours before finding Mahbubeh's body.

For Hossain Mohammad Zadeh, a 45-year-old farmer, there was little consolation. His wife, two daughters and one son were dead.

Mr. Zadeh said he was tending his cattle when the quake struck.

"I saw some rocks falling from the mountain. The mountain was shaking. It seemed angry. Everything was shaking," Mr. Zadeh said in between racking sobs. He was too distressed to bother with his youngest daughter, an eight-year-old who sat on the rubble of their home, weeping for her dead mother.

Unlike many other villages struck by the quake, Ardadkul was a little more prosperous. The homes were made not of mud but concrete, bricks and steel.

But after Saturday, no structure in the village was standing. Relief workers found no streets to reach the rubble. They climbed on the top of brick-and-concrete hillocks to look for survivors.

CIA Iraqis jailed in U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) —

Iraqis paid by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for an unsuccessful attempt to oust President Saddam Hussein, then offered asylum in the United States, now face deportation, possibly back to Iraq, the New York Times reported Saturday.

At least 13 refugees are accused by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of being "a danger to the security of the United States."

Government lawyers told the Times the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fears the men could be Iraqi spies or terrorists.

If those accusations are upheld against the men, who are seeking political asylum, they could be deported, possibly to Iraq, the Times said.

In telephone interviews with the Times, some of the men insist they are victims of infighting among various Iraqi resistance groups.

The Iraqis in custody in California were defectors from their homeland's military and joined CIA-backed resistance groups called the Iraqi National Accord and the Iraqi National Congress.

"We came to this land legally, on account of the U.S. government and they put us inside of a jail," Ali Yasin Mohammad Karim told the newspaper.

"I have a death penalty against me from Saddam Hussein. So I think it is not possible that I am his agent," he added.

The Iraqis jailed in California were among 600 men, women and children who fled their homes after Iraqi troops invaded the Kurdish regions of northern Iraq.

Sara Campos, a lawyer representing five of the men, told the Times: "These men are trapped in a cruel dilemma that the U.S. created. Some of the men are depressed and nearly suicidal. They have been questioned whether being in a U.S. jail is any better than being subjected to the tyranny of Saddam Hussein."

Transexual wins first time court case in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian transexual has won the right to equally divide the inheritance of her millionaire father with her brother in an unprecedented court case in Egypt, a government daily reported on Sunday.

The millionaire had left to his children — initially two boys — a huge fortune upon his death which under Islamic law was to be divided equally. But after his death one of the boys had a sex-change operation, prompting the brother to file suit asking that his "sister" get only one third of the inheritance in line with Islamic law, Al Akhbar newspaper said.

A court in the northern city of Alexandria dismissed the suit and said both would get an equal share of the fortune since the sex operation was undertaken after the father's death.

The head of Al Azhar, the highest Sunni Muslim authority in Egypt, in June 1996 issued a religious decree saying that a transexual who had not changed sex before his parents' death inherits like a man.

There have been dozens of sex-change operations in Egypt over the past 10 years but only this was the "strangest case" to hit the courts, according to the daily.

Japan blanks out pornography at ADB Fukuoka

JAPAN (R) — Japan has ensured that delegates attending the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) annual meeting here have only good clean fun. The main hotel where most of the 3,000 delegates are staying for the meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors has blanked out two pay channels which usually show pornographic movies.

Hotel staff said they took the action on the advice of Japanese officials who organised the gathering. "They said the films were not appropriate for a distinguished gathering like the ADB," one staff member said.

Uganda, Sudan agree to let go prisoners in peace move

NAIROBI (R) — The presidents of Uganda and Sudan, at talks arranged by Kenya, have agreed to release all those held captive in border clashes.

The agreement was contained in a formal communique published on Sunday after a meeting between presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Omar Hassan Bashir of Sudan and Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya in the west Kenyan town of Eldoret on Saturday.

Mr. Moi invited Mr. Museveni and Lieutenant-General Bashir to the meeting in an attempt to resolve the deep differences between Uganda and Sudan, which accuse each other of helping rebels on their common border.

The communique said Gen. Bashir and Mr. Museveni also agreed to reactivate past agreements between their countries. Uganda cut diplomatic relations with Sudan in 1995.

The official Kenyan Presidential Press Unit quoted Mr. Moi as saying in Eldoret that he hoped Uganda and Sudan would reach an amicable solution to their problems because the region needed development instead of conflict.

Mr. Moi said he was calling a meeting of a subcommittee of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to help end civil war in southern Sudan. The committee includes representatives of Kenya, Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Mr. Moi, who first held separate talks with Mr. Museveni and then with Gen. Bashir, said he hoped their meeting on Saturday would be a firm

Southern Sudan rebels claim another victory

NAIROBI (R) — Sudanese rebel leader John Garang said his forces have captured the town of Tonj in the Bahr el Jebel State and were advancing towards the district headquarters at Wau in southern Sudan.

Colonel John Garang, the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) told the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) by satellite telephone on Saturday: "We will soon take Wau. We are liberating the whole of the southern Sudan."

In the broadcast, monitored in Nairobi, Col. Garang said his forces seized the important town of Tonj late on Friday afternoon after several hours of fighting.

He said there was "a lot of fighting", involving 2,000 government troops, at Tonj, with many dead and wounded on the government side. "We are literally destroying the government army in the south," he said.

Last week, the SPLA said the rebels had captured the Lakes (Bahr el Jebel) state capital Rumbek, 70 kilometres southeast of Tonj in April. The rebels said they captured several state ministers and members of the state parliament in Rumbek.

The SPLA has recently claimed a string of successes further south, near the Uganda border, including the capture of Yei, a key town near the Uganda and Zaire borders. But the key city of Juba, on the Nile, remains in government hands.

The SPLA has denounced the peace agreement signed recently in Khartoum between the Sudan government and several southern Sudanese groups who were formerly linked with the SPLA.

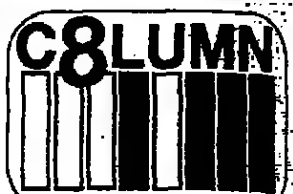
beginning towards trust between the member states of IGAD.

IGAD has in the past helped arrange meetings between the Sudanese government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by Colonel John Garang.

Mr. Museveni and Gen. Bashir said they "appreciated the positive points" in the Sudanese government's recent peace agreement with southern factions other than the SPLA and agreed that Col. Garang might have a role in solving

"other humanitarian problems." Uganda accuses the Sudanese government of arming and giving bases in south Sudan to Ugandan rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Sudan accuses Uganda of arming and supporting the SPLA.

The SPLA has fought since 1983 for greater autonomy for the Christian and Animist south from the mostly Muslim Arab north and has scored its biggest success since 1991 with a series of offensives this year.



Run-down zoo mirrors life in general in Kisangani

KISANGANI, Zaire —

The last animal at Kisangani Zoo was given what its keepers regard as the ultimate tribute when it died last month. They refused to eat it. The animal, a crocodile which zookeepers said had spent at least 20 years in captivity at the Kisangani Biological Gardens, was instead dumped below the picturesque Tsope Falls, where it drifted into the Zaire river from where it originally came. "It hadn't eaten for a long time and was sick," said Moses Imwenza, now the only remaining keeper at the zoo. "You can't eat a sick crocodile, so when it died we pushed it back."

Kisangani's zoo, set in lush, overgrown gardens on the banks of the Tsope river, is a metaphor for the faded glory this central African city once enjoyed.

56-year-old woman starts flight around the world

LONDON (AFP) — A 56-year-old British grandmother Saturday took off from Denham on the outskirts of London on an attempt to become the first woman to pilot a helicopter round the world. Jennifer Murray was waved off by the Duchess of York — "Fergie" — as she flew east to Paris on the first leg of her route through 28 countries, stopping 80 times for refuelling. Murray expects to take 97 days to complete the journey and will lead a helicopter fly-past in Hong Kong as part of the handover celebrations in June. She hopes to raise 500,000 pounds (\$800,000) in charity in her attempt.

Humphrey, the Downing Street cat, eats one of the queen's ducks

LONDON (AFP) — Humphrey, the resident cat at 10 Downing Street, has caused the new British government its first potential embarrassment with Buckingham Palace, after it was caught eating one of the queen's ducks, it was reported Sunday. The cat caught the baby duckling in St. James's Park in front of Buckingham Palace in London and swaggered back to Downing Street with it in its mouth. The News of the World said: "Earlier this week Prime Minister Tony Blair's wife, Cherie, gave Humphrey official approval — by posing holding the animal, in her back garden for photographers. Recent reports said she believed cats to be unhygienic and wanted him removed. The paper suggested Blair might now apologise when he has his next audience with Queen Elizabeth II. Humphrey, a stray black and white house cat who wandered off the street in 1989, is a notorious bird and mouse killer."